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HISTORY  
OF  
POLITICAL LIFE  
IN  
AMERICA  
BY  
WILLIAM PITT

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WILLIAM PITT



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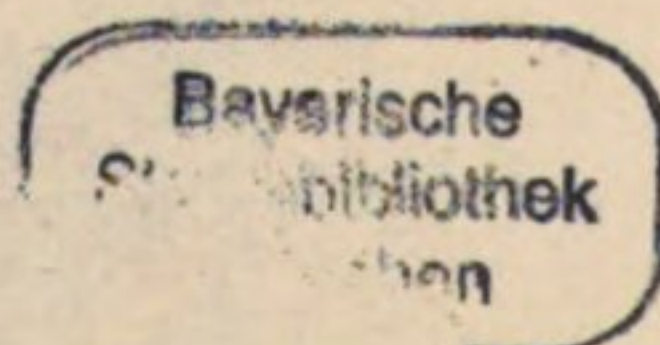


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By JOHN GIFFORD, Esq.

*IN SIX VOLUMES.*

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NEC SIBI, SED TOTI GENITUM SE CREDERE MUNDO.

LUCAN.

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London :

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1809.



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# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

Effects of the Victory of the Nile--- Confidence in the Minister increased--- Lenient measures of Lord Cornwallis, the new Viceroy of Ireland, carried to excess--- Peace of the Country still disturbed by the Rebels--Address to the Viceroy, complimenting him at the expence of his Predecessor---Prudent conduct of Lord Cornwallis on the occasion---His Speech on the prorogation of Parliament in 1798---Justly characterizes the late Rebellion--- Praises the vigorous policy of Lord Camden---Ascribes the fury of the Rebels to religious motives--- Continental affairs--- Spirited Manifesto of the Porte---Acknowledges the vast importance of the victory in the Mediterranean--- Unfolds the spirit of French policy with equal force, ability,,and truth---The Turks make active preparations for war--- Favourable disposition of the Northern powers --- Foreign policy of Mr. Pitt at this conjuncture--- Endeavours to form a new Confederacy against France--- Treaty concluded with the Emperor of Russia---French affairs---Continuance of the Reign of Terror---Severity of Military Conscriptions--- False account of the Battle of the Nile in a French official paper---The Directory



disclaim all knowledge of the Expedition to Egypt---  
Their perfidy and duplicity exposed in their communications with the Porte---Contradiction between their declarations and those of Ruffin, their Ambassador, at Constantinople---Ruffin produces a Letter, avowing the object of the Expedition to Egypt to be the punishment of the Beys for injuries committed on Frenchmen---Talleyrand denies this to the Turkish Ambassador, at Paris, and declares the conquest of Malta to be the sole object of the Expedition---Falsehoods contained in the French Manifesto proved by the intercepted letters from the French army in Egypt---The Military conscription extended to the conquered countries---Partial insurrections in the Netherlands---Insolence of Garat, the French Envoy at Naples---Demands the release of all Traitors, imprisoned for their crimes---The King of Naples prepares for war---Enters the Roman Territory---Is defeated at Porto Fornio---Concludes an armistice with the French---Leaves his Capital, and retires to Sicily---Popular tumults excited by the French at Naples---A revolution effected on French principles---The Neapolitan Republic proclaimed---Meeting of Parliament---The King's Speech---Thanks voted to Nelson and his followers---The Admiral is created BARON NELSON OF THE NILE---Committee of Supply---Mr. Pitt details the expences of the coming year, and the means of providing for them---Flourishing state of Commerce---Large increase of Exports and Imports---Mr. Pitt adverts to the frauds which had been practised to defeat the project of the Triple Assessment---Proposes a new scheme of Finance---The Tax upon Income---Measures proposed for rendering it effective---Powers of Commissioners under the Act---Reflections on the multiplication of Oaths occasioned by the Revenue Laws---Estimated amount of the Tax, ten millions---Grounds of that Estimate--Advantages of raising a large



portion of the Supplies within the year--- The energy of the Parliament the cause of National prosperity--- Mr. Pitt confutes the notion that a Commercial people cannot be a Warlike people--- Pronounces an eulogy on the British Constitution--- Mr. Tierney opposes the Tax--- Resolutions proposed by Mr. Pitt carried without a division--- Remarks on the unequal operation of the Tax upon Income---Farther debates on the subject---The Bill opposed by Sir John Sinclair, Sir Francis Baring, and Mr. William Smith---The fallacy of Sir John Sinclair's arguments exposed---Mr. Pitt justifies the Tax---Comments on the inconsistency of Mr. Smith in admitting the justice of the principle, and opposing every measure for carrying it into effect---Corrects his mistatements on the distinctions of society---Reprobates all new-fangled notions respecting *Equality*--- Proves Mr. Smith's arguments to extend to an equal distribution of property--- Defends the Bill from the imputation of establishing a *Tithe*--- Explains the difference between *Tithe* and the contribution of a Tenth part of Income to be levied by the Act---Argument examined relative to the different effects of the Tax on permanent and on temporary estates--- The Bill passes the Commons---Is opposed in the Lords by the Duke of Bedford, and Lords Suffolk and Holland--- Manly conduct of Lord Grenville---Mistaken position of Lord Holland--- Assertion of the Duke of Bedford respecting Tithes contradicted by the Chancellor--- Bill passed into a Law--- Farther Supplies---New Taxes--- Subsidy to Russia---Opposed by Mr. Tierney---Mr. Pitt repels the conclusions drawn by Mr. Tierney regarding the object of the war, and the intentions of the Cabinet--- Reflections on the evil tendency of the writings of the French Economists and Philosophists---The inconsistency of Mr. Tierney's arguments detected, and the confusion of his ideas exposed, by Mr. Pitt---Mr. Pitt draws a just



character of the French Republic---Seditious Societies---  
Papers respecting them referred to a Secret Committee---  
Report of that Committee---It unfolds a complicated scene  
of sedition and treason---Plan, and object, of the Societies,  
to establish a Democratic Republic in Great Britain with  
the assistance of France---Their Address to the French  
Directory---The London Corresponding Society abandon  
the project of annual Parliaments, and universal suffrage,  
for still more Revolutionary schemes---United Irishmen  
form Societies in England---Administer unlawful Oaths---  
Many of them enter the Naval service---Plans for mur-  
dering their officers, and for carrying their ships into an  
enemy's port---Swear to murder the Protestants---Plan for  
exciting an insurrection in London---and for seizing,  
at the same moment, the two Houses of Parliament,  
the Tower, and the Bank---Mr. Pitt introduces two Bills,  
one for renewing the Bill to enable the King to detain  
persons suspected of Treason, and another for the sup-  
pression of Seditious Societies---Proposes to empower the  
King to imprison such persons in any one of his Gaols---  
Members of Secret Societies rendered liable to fine,  
imprisonment, or transportation, according to the nature  
of their offence---Proprietors of houses at which such  
Societies are held subjected to a fine---All lectures and  
discussions at which money is taken for admission pro-  
hibited---Printers compelled to affix their names to hand-  
bills---All presses to be registered---These Bills passed  
into Laws.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

Irish affairs—State of Ireland, from her first connection with England to the rebellion of 1798—Efforts of the Catholics to produce a separation of the two countries—The Catholic Priests exhort their flocks, previous to the rebellion in 1641, not to give their votes to Protestant candidates—Imperfect state of the representation in Ireland—Abuse of the elective franchise by the Catholics—Their conduct, the natural result of their religious principles—An union of Great Britain and Ireland projected by Mr. Pitt—The King's message to Parliament, on the subject—Debate on the message—Address moved by Mr. Dundas—Opposed by Mr. Sheridan—He ascribes the evils prevalent in Ireland to the ignorance and poverty of the people—Denies the competency of Parliament to conclude an union—Moves an amendment—Address supported by Mr. Canning—Mr. Pitt's speech—Censures Mr. Sheridan's doctrine as leading to jacobinism—Asserts the competence of Parliament—Contrasts the former statements of Opposition, relative to the defects in the Irish Constitution, with their present eulogies on the same system—Shews the settlement of 1782 not to have been *final*—Displays the advantages of an union to both countries—Proves its necessity, from the evils arising from the present state of parties in Ireland—Instances the case of the Regency, to prove that a difference on points of primary importance might subsist between the two separate Parliaments—Mr. Sheridan's amendment rejected, and the address adopted—Public discussions of the same subject in Ireland—Great ferment occasioned by it in that country—Tract in favour of the Union, by Mr. Edward Cooke—Meeting of the Irish Bar—They decide against the Union—Resolution of the Corporation of



Dublin against the Union—The bankers and merchants of Dublin pass similar resolutions—Meeting of the Irish Parliament—The Viceroy's speech—Address carried in the House of Lords without a division—Majority of *one* only in favour of the address in the Commons—Lord Castlereagh condemns the rejection of the plan without examination—The address rejected, on the report, by a majority of five—The members who voted with the minister are insulted by the populace—Mr. Pitt unfolds his plan of an Union to the British House of Commons—Expresses a hope that the measure will be ultimately carried—Takes a comprehensive view of the question in all its bearings—Supports his own sentiments by those of Mr. Foster, on the question of the commercial propositions—Proves Mr. Foster's former opinion to be directly opposite to his present opinion—Considers the measure as necessary for the security of Ireland—Takes a view of the religious disputes in Ireland—Considers all questions relating to the Catholic claims as more likely to be impartially discussed in an united, than in a separate, legislature—Remark upon Mr. Pitt's notion, respecting tithes, in Ireland—Commercial benefits to be derived by Ireland from the Union—Ireland indebted to the liberality of the British Parliament for her present advantages in trade—Mr. Pitt confutes the objections of Mr. Sheridan and others, who oppose the Union—Exposes the folly and dangerous tendency of the asserted principle of the sovereignty of the people—Shews the independence of Ireland not to be affected by the Union—Adduces the instance of the advantages resulting to the Scotch from their Union with England, in proof of the benefits to be expected from a similar measure by Ireland—Proposes eight resolutions, as the ground-work of an Union—Mr. Sheridan opposes them—He compliments Mr. Pitt as an orator, but condemns him as a statesman—Moves an amendment, which is rejected by 140 votes



against 15—Resumed debate on the question—The Union opposed by Mr. St. John—Mr. Grey's speech in opposition to it—Is answered by Mr. Dundas—Mr. Sheridan asserts that, if a sovereignty does not rest in the people, the House of Brunswick are usurpers—Adduces the revolution of 1688 in support of *his position*—The revolution proved to afford no sanction to such a principle—No appeal was made to the people on that occasion—Mr. Sheridan's own authority quoted to prove that the revolution was effected in contradiction to the sentiments of a majority of the people—Mr. Windham corrects a gross mistake on the part of Mr. Sheridan—He ridicules the preposterous notion of the sovereignty of the people—Reflections on that subject—The House of Lords concur in the resolutions of the Commons—They are carried up to the Throne—Curious specimen of British philanthropy—Resolutions transmitted to Ireland—Irish Parliament prorogued—Renewal of the discussions on the Union in 1800—The Catholics of Dublin pass resolutions against the Union—The Irish Parliament meet—Motion of Sir Lawrence Parsons, deprecating an Union, rejected by a majority of forty-two—Message from the Viceroy, recommending an Union to the consideration of Parliament—Lord Castlereagh's speech, in support of the measure—Proposes a compensation for the loss of Parliamentary interest—Thoughts on the subject—Contends that nothing but an Union can establish the security of the Protestant Church in Ireland—Remarks on the effect of the Union on the question of Catholic emancipation—Mistatement respecting the relative numbers of Protestants and Romanists corrected—No pledge nor promise made by Mr. Pitt, or by his authority, to support the Catholic claims—The whole of the British Cabinet of that day appealed to in support of this fact—The Union most violently opposed by Mr. Grattan—He devotes the British Minister to “an *immortality*



of *eternal* infamy"—His speech aptly characterized by an absentee—Specimen of Mr. George Ponsonby's eloquence—He pronounces the House of Commons to be mad, and expresses his fears of being bitten—Sir John Parnell moves an address to the King, to dissolve the Parliament—The motion rejected by the House—Decision in favour of an Union carried by 158 votes against 115—The Irish House of Commons defended from the charge of inconsistency on this question—Debates on the same subject, in the Irish House of Lords—Lord Clare's speech—The Union voted by a large majority—The King's message to the British Parliament, communicating the Irish resolutions—Debates on the question—Mr. Pitt's speech—Explains his sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and his reasons for the change which had taken place in his opinions on that question—Moves an address to the King—Mr. Grey opposes the address—Mr. Pitt's reply—The address carried in both Houses, and the Union finally determined.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

Transactions in Egypt after the battle of the Nile—Means adopted by Buonaparté for securing his conquest—Blasphemous proclamations an essential part of his *moral* artillery—Converts the koran of Mahomet into a code of Jacobinism—Holds a *divan*, and establishes an Institute at Grand Cairo—Insurrection in that city—Buonaparté resolves to besiege St. John of Acra—Jaffa taken by assault—Deliberate murder of three thousand eight hundred Turkish prisoners within a mile of the town—Reasons assigned for this barbarous deed—Orders five hundred and eighty of his own sick soldiers to be poisoned in the hospital at Jaffa—Noble conduct of a French physician on that occasion—



Blasphemous letter of Buonaparté to Ghezzar Pacha, Governor of Acra—Arrival of Sir Sidney Smith with some British vessels at Acra—The French lay siege to the place—Their train of artillery taken by the British ships—Various ineffectual assaults on the town—Gallant conduct of the British Admiral—The French make some practicable breaches in the walls—Various ineffectual assaults on the town—Strong mark of Ghezzar's attachment to the English—A Turkish reinforcement arrives—The Turks, led on by the English, repulse the French on all sides—Treachery of Buonaparté—He abandons the siege and returns to Egypt—Prefers a charge of cruelty against Sir Sidney Smith—Its falsehood demonstrated—Communication between Buonaparté and Tippoo Sultaun—Projects of Tippoo for the extirpation of the British from India—His treaty with the French—Wisdom, vigour, and decision, displayed by Lord Mornington, Governor-General of India, in counteracting the machinations of the enemy—Entrance of the British army into the Mysore—Capture of Seringapatam—Death of Tippoo—Buonaparté deserts his post in Egypt, and returns to France—State of the French army at the period of his departure—Falsehoods contained in his valedictory address to his troops—His Letter to Kleber—Military operations on the Continent of Europe—Relative force of the hostile armies—The French enter Suabia without any previous declaration of war—Military operations in Germany—In the country of the Grisons—And in the Tyrol—The Archduke Charles compels General Jourdan to evacuate Suabia—The French expelled from the Grisons—Actions in Switzerland—The Archduke attacks the French position before Zurich—Desperate engagement—Massena evacuates the post—Operations in Italy—Successive defeats of the French, under Scherer, by Generals Kaim and Kray—Battle near Verona, gained by the Austrians—Retreat of the French beyond the Mincio—Arrival



of Marshal Suworrow, with 20,000 Russians—Defeats the French on the Adda—The allies enter Milan—Moreau, who has succeeded Scherer, falls back upon Turin—Loss of the French from the commencement of the campaign—Moreau's head quarters at Coni—The allies enter Turin and besiege the citadel—General Macdonald, with the army of Naples, arrives in Tuscany---Endeavours to form a junction with Moreau---Is defeated with great loss, and returns to Tuscany---Force of the Allies at this period---Macdonald again evacuates Tuscany, and joins Moreau---Surrender of Alexandria to the Allies---Mantua capitulates---The French, under Joubert, seek to raise the siege of Tortona---Battle of Novi---Suworrow attacks the French in a most advantageous position---Is repulsed three different times---General Joubert killed---Skilful manœuvre of General Melas---The French position carried---Great loss sustained by the French in this action---Suworrow departs for Switzerland---Arrival of General Korsakow and a Russian army in Switzerland---Strange conduct of the Archduke Charles—Mysterious policy of the Austrian cabinet---The Archduke leaves Switzerland, at the moment when his success was certain---The Russians and Austrians defeated by Massena---General Hoetze killed---The Russians, under Korsakow, evacuate Switzerland---Perilous situation of Suworrow---Massena marches against him---Suworrow defeats the French in different actions---Makes good his retreat to Germany---Object of the campaign frustrated by the unprincipled conduct of Austria---British expedition against Holland---The first division of the army lands at the Helder---Surrender of the Dutch fleet to Admiral Mitchell---Arrival of the Russian auxiliaries in Holland---The Duke of York takes the command of the allied force---The Allies advance---Defeat the French and Dutch in different engagements---Misconduct of the Russians, in two of the actions---The Allies



resolve to evacuate the country---Reflections on their situation---Their means of obtaining the most favourable terms---Convention concluded with the French General---Its conditions considered---The British troops withdrawn from Holland---The Dutch colony of Surinam surrendered to the British.

## CHAPTER XLV.

French Affairs---Unconstitutional proceedings of the Directory---They violate the Elective Franchise---Annul the returns of their Opponents in the two Councils---Propose to confiscate the Property of the transported Legislators---Manly speech of Rouchon on the Question---Charges the attempt with exceeding in cruelty the ferocious deeds of Heliogabalus and Nero---Defends the Exiles, on the ground that they had been condemned without Trial---Riot in the Council---Rouchon *hooted out* of the Hall---Proposal of the Directory adopted---False accusations of England by the Directory---Misrepresent the Battle of the Nile---They are hated by the People---Are all turned out of office, except Barras---The Abbè Sieyes one of the new Directory---Forms the plan of a new Revolution---Buonaparté's return to France entirely his own act---Strange conduct of the Directory towards him---Conference between Sieyes, Buonaparté, and Roederer---The Councils removed to Saint Cloud---The command of the armed force given to Buonaparté---Barras resigns his seat in the Directory---Infidelity of the Directorial Guard---Buonaparté enters the Council of Elders---Is questioned as to his views---Reviles the Council---His speech---Remarks on it---He harangues the Troops, and excites them to revolt---Proceedings in the Council of Five Hundred---The members take a new oath of fidelity to the Constitution---Buonaparté enters their



Hall---An universal clamour ensues---An attempt is made to stab him with a dagger---He is rescued by the Grenadiers---Conduct of Lucien Buonaparté, President of the Council of Five Hundred---Speech of Tallot---The Members are expelled from their Hall by the Troops, with fixed bayonets---The Council of Elders declare themselves the entire Legislative Body---Memorable speech of Boulay de la Meurthe---The Constitution annihilated, and a Consular Government established---New oath administered to all Public Officers---Reflections on the constant violation of oaths by the French---Buonaparté made (by himself) First Consul---Meeting of the British Parliament---Means taken for recruiting the Army---Supplies voted for Three Months---Parliament adjourned for the Holidays---Buonaparté's Letter to the King, on the subject of Peace---Supposed object of it---Reasons for doubting the Consul's sincerity---Lord Grenville's answer---The Consul's reply---Talleyrand's falsehoods and contradictions confuted by the declarations of his Brother Patriots, Robespierre and Brissot---The subject discussed in Parliament---The Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland defend the First Consul, and arraign the British Ministry---Conduct of the Cabinet supported by Lord Grenville---Debates in the Commons---Address moved by Mr. Dundas---Opposed by Mr. Whitbread---Mr. Whitbread's errors corrected by Mr. Canning---Mr. Erskine condemns the conduct of Ministers---Mr. Pitt's speech---Confutes the arguments of Mr. Erskine---Takes a comprehensive view of the question of aggression---Shews the arguments of Mr. Erskine to have been extracted from his pamphlet, which had been long since confuted---Mr. Pitt asserts the rigid neutrality of this Country towards France previous to the War---States the causes of the failure of the last negotiation---Considers the conduct of France to the Powers of the Continent---Describes the ruling principles of the



French Revolution---Delineates the Character and Conduct of Buonaparté---Proves the necessity of entering into his personal character in the present discussion---That character affords no security for the observance of treaties---Mr. Pitt combats the objections of Mr. Tierney---Mr. Nicholl's observations on the scarcity of Corn answered by Mr. Pitt---Mr. Pitt justifies the Cabinet against the charge of Inconsistency, in having negotiated in 1797 with France, and in refusing to negotiate at the present moment---He is answered by Mr. Fox---Address, approving of the conduct of Ministers, carried by 265 votes against 64---Subsidy to Foreign Powers---Opposed by Mr. Tierney, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. William Smith---Supported by Mr. Pitt---Granted by the House---Motion for compelling Ministers to open a negotiation with France rejected by both Houses---The Budget---Motions relative to the Dutch Expedition, by Lord Holland, and Mr. Sheridan, negatived---Renewal of the Suspension Bill---Bill for preventing the consumption of New Bread---Sir Henry Mildmay introduced a Bill for preventing British Subjects from taking the veil---Supported by Mr. Pitt---Opposed by Mr. Windham---Observations on the conduct of Mr. Burke's Friends on all subjects relating to the Papists---Bill passes the Commons---Is rejected by the Lords---Bill for preventing the marriage of an Adulteress with the object of her criminal Attachment, brought into the Upper House by Lord Auckland---Debate on the subject---The Bill supported by Lord Eldon, Lord Grenville, and most of the Bishops---Opposed by the Duke of Clarence, Lords Westmoreland and Mulgrave---Remarks on an extraordinary passage in a Speech of the Duke of Clarence---Thoughts on this Discussion.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

Military operations on the Continent---Genoa surrenders to the  
Austrians---Buonaparté enters Italy---Drives the Austrians  
from Milan and Pavia---Unaccountable inactivity of the  
Austrian Commander, General Melas---Battle of Maren-  
go---The French defeated on every side---Battle restored  
by a masterly manœuvre of General Desaix---Victory  
finally declares for the French---Impatience of the Aus-  
trian troops to attack the French the next morning---  
Disgraceful Convention concluded by Melas---Moreau  
enters Germany and overruns Saxony---An Armistice---  
Renewal of military operations in Germany---The Battle  
of Hohenlinden---Peace concluded at Luneville---By this  
treaty the French realize the projects of Brissot and  
Robespierre by extending their boundary to the Rhine---  
Affairs of Egypt---Treaty of El Arish---Kleber assas-  
sinated---He is succeeded in the command of the Army  
by Menou---State of Public Affairs at the close of the  
eighteenth century---View of Mr. Pitt's policy---Con-  
siderations on the probable state of the country had a  
different system of policy been pursued---The argument  
illustrated by a reference to the actual state of those  
powers who had procured peace with France---The origin  
of the war, its progress, and its partial failure, considered  
in relation to Mr. Pitt's conduct---Effect of the war upon  
England beneficial on the whole---Scarcity of Corn---  
Reflections on its causes---War proved not to increase the  
price of Corn---Popular commotions in the Capital---  
Parliament convened---The King's Speech---Legislative  
measures adopted for averting the effects of the scarcity---  
Wise principles of political economy entertained by Mr.  
Pitt---Mr. Tierney moves an inquiry into the State of the



Nation---Motion rejected by one hundred and fifty-seven  
to thirty-seven---Principles avowed by the Northern  
powers---Incompatible with the maritime greatness and  
commercial interests of Great Britain---Contrary to the  
established Law of Nations---Meeting of the *Imperial*  
Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Ireland---New title assumed by the King---Reflections on  
the abandonment of the old title of *King of France*---  
Mr. Addington again elected Speaker of the House of  
Commons---Difference between the King and his Minis-  
ters on the Catholic Question---Mr. Pitt's former decla-  
rations on this subject referred to---Remarks on the  
*conditions* which Mr. Pitt had declared to be necessary  
for the adoption of the proposed measure---These condi-  
tions shewn not to exist---No pledge given by Mr. Pitt to  
the Irish Papists to bring forward the Question of giving  
them further indulgences---Mr. Dundas commissioned to  
open the matter to the King---Result of the conference---  
Examination of the arguments in favour of the Question  
---The Coronation Oath---The King complete master of  
the subject---Refuses to yield his conscience to the force  
of metaphysical subtleties---His Majesty resolutely rejects  
the proposal of his Ministers---Mr. Pitt a sincere friend to  
the *Established Church*---Remarks on the new Test, which  
he meant to introduce as a substitute for the existing Test---  
Its efficacy denied---Mr. Pitt deceived as to the Catholic  
Question---Inefficacy of the proposed measure maintained---  
That measure at variance with the general principle of Mr.  
Pitt's policy---Probable cause of his conduct on this occasion  
---Reflections on the imputed change in the principles of  
modern Papists---Existence of such change disproved by the  
pastoral letter of Dr. Troy---The fourth Council of Late-  
ran imposes obligations on a Papist incompatible with  
his duty to a Protestant Government---The Papists of  
Ireland should have been called upon to renounce the prin-



ciples contained in the decrees of that Council---Distinction  
 drawn between *toleration* and *encouragement*--- Mr. Pitt  
 and his principal colleagues tender their resignations to the  
 King; but offer to remain in place till a new Ministry is  
 formed---The Imperial Parliament opened by the King---  
 Speech from the Throne---Debate on the Address in the  
 House of Commons--- Speech of Mr. Grey--- His senti-  
 ments incompatible with the principles of the Old Whigs  
 ---Ministers defended by Mr. Pitt---Address carried---  
 Lord Grenville, in the House of Peers, avows the Catho-  
 lic Question to be the cause of the change of the Ministry  
 ---Mr. Pitt opens the Budget---Takes a view of the pros-  
 perous state of the Country--- New Ministry--- Mr. Ad-  
 dington, Premier--- Mr. Pitt and his friends promise to  
 support the new Ministers---General character of the new  
 Administration---Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas explain their con-  
 duct in the House of Commons---Papers circulated among  
 the Papists of Ireland by Lord Cornwallis--- Animadver-  
 sions on these papers---General remarks on the conduct  
 of Mr. Pitt.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

Progress of the disputes with the Northern Powers—Embargo  
 laid on all their ships in British harbours—The British  
 Envoys recalled from their courts—Plans of the confede-  
 rates—Seizure of Hamburgh by the Danes—The King  
 of Denmark a tool of Buonaparté—Hanover invaded by  
 Prussia—A British fleet passes the Sound—Battle of  
 Copenhagen—The King of Denmark abandons the  
 Northern Confederacy—Assassination of the Russian  
 Emperor, Paul—Accession of Alexander to the Throne  
 of Russia—Peace with the Northern Powers—A British  
 force lands in Egypt—Military operations in that country  
 —Battle of the 21st of March, 1801—Defeat of the  
 French—Death of Sir Ralph Abercrombie—General Hut-  
 chinson succeeds to the command of the army—Reduction  
 of Grand Cairo—Capitulation of Alexandria—Final



evacuation of Egypt by the French—News of this event first received at Paris—Negotiations for peace—Preliminaries signed in London—Conditions of the treaty—Lord Cornwallis sent to France—Definitive treaty signed at Amiens—The Peace popular in England—Reflections on the consequences of the war—Failure of its principal objects—The war beneficial, on the whole, to Great Britain—Terms of peace highly favourable to France—Mr. Pitt defends the peace in Parliament—The Opposition approve it—Mr. Windham condemns it—His able delineation of the spirit of the French government—Difference of opinion, on the subject of peace, between Mr. Pitt and his friends, and the Members of the Portland-Party—Probable influence of that difference on Mr. Pitt's resignation—Debates on the peace-establishment—Mr. Pitt contends for the necessity of a powerful and extensive establishment—Mr. Fox defends the propriety of an ordinary establishment—Mr. Whitbread attacks the public character of Mr. Pitt—Is silenced by Mr. Pitt—Sir Francis Burdett makes a similar attack—Mr. Pitt defended by Lord Temple—Memorable speech of Mr. Archdall, on the same side—The Baronet's motion rejected by 246 votes against 39—Mr. John Nicholls moves a vote of thanks to the King for dismissing Ministers, whom his Majesty had *not* dismissed—Amendment moved by Lord Belgrave, converting the proposed vote of censure on the late Ministry into a vote of thanks—Opposed by Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Grey—Supported by Sir Henry Mildmay, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. S. Thornton—Sir Robert Peel's speech in praise of Mr. Pitt—Amendment carried by a great majority—Separate vote of thanks to Mr. Pitt—proposed by Sir Henry Mildmay, carried by 211 votes against 52—Commemoration of Mr. Pitt's Birth—Hostile disposition of Buonaparté—Extension of his power on the continent—He complains of the licentiousness of the British Press—Betrays a gross ignorance of the laws and constitution of England—Judicious answer of Lord Hawkesbury to the complaints of the French Consul—Conciliatory disposition of the British Cabinet—Trial of Peltier for a libel on Buonaparté—Animadversions on certain doctrines advanced on that trial—Insolent conduct of Buonaparté to Lord Whitworth, the British Ambassador—Dispute relating to the restoration of Malta—Aggressive projects of Buonaparté—Lord Whitworth recalled—War declared.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Fallacy of Mr. Addington's hopes of the permanence of the Peace of Amiens—Motives of Mr. Pitt's approbation of the Peace—He supports the Ministers on the renewal of hostilities—Different opinions respecting the War—Examination of the arguments on that subject—Mr. Pitt's Speech on the War—He enforces the necessity of vigorous measures as the only efficient means of defeating the designs of the enemy—Deprecates the adoption of a weak and timid system of policy—The Ministers neglect to follow his advice—Different qualifications necessary for a SPEAKER and a PREMIER, a *Naval Commander*, and a *First Lord of the Admiralty*—Colonel Patten's motion of censure—Mr. Pitt moves the previous question—His conduct on this occasion blamed by both parties—Justification of that conduct, and of the principles by which he was uniformly actuated, when out of place—His Speech on the means of national defence—Reproves Ministers for their inefficiency—Moves for papers, with a view to an Inquiry into the criminal neglect of the Admiralty—Proves the existence of a torpid inactivity in that Board—His motion opposed by Ministers—Mr. Sheridan accuses him of "factions and party motives;" and pronounces a panegyric on Lord St. Vincent—Instances of gross ignorance and imprudence in the Board of Admiralty—Mr. Sheridan compares Lord St. Vincent with the late Lord Chatham—Injustice and folly of the comparison shown—Mr. Pitt extols the naval character of Lord St. Vincent—His reply to Mr. Sheridan—He proves the reduced state of the Navy since the Peace of Amiens—His motion rejected by the House—Weakness of Mr. Addington's Administration becomes more and more evident—The Premier makes overtures to Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt refuses to come into power without his former Colleagues—Mr. Addington refusing to admit Lord Grenville into the Cabinet, the negotiation is broken off—Change of conduct in Mr. Addington after this fruitless attempt—Mr. Fox's motion on the military state of the nation—Supported by Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt differs from Mr. Fox on the power of the King to call his subjects to arms in the case of invasion—Thoughts on this subject—Mr. Fox's motion rejected by a majority of fifty-two—Another debate on



the same subject—Majority in favour of the Minister only thirty-seven—Mr. Addington resigns—The King commands Mr. Pitt to form a new Ministry—The Grenville party refuse to come into power without Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt presses his Majesty to admit Mr. Fox into the Cabinet, but is unable to remove his Majesty's objections—Letter from Lord Grenville to Mr. Pitt—Examination of the arguments urged in that letter—The King's objection investigated, and proved to be valid—Reflections on the conduct of Lord Grenville—Probable consequences of a Cabinet formed on the *latitudinarian* principle advanced by his Lordship—The new Ministry—State of the country on Mr. Pitt's return to power—State of the Continent—Murder of the Duke D'Enghien—It excites great disgust in France—Spirited remonstrance of Russia and Sweden on the subject—Base conduct of Prussia, and of the Princes of Germany—Buonaparté assumes the title of Emperor of the French—Cowardice of the Pope in crowning the murderer of the Duke D'Enghien—Military measures proposed by Mr. Pitt—Discussions in the House of Commons—The Minister's plan carried by a small majority—Mr. Sheridan's Speech—Declares party-contentions to be objects of greater importance than the means of national defence—Mr. Grey obtains a majority in the House of Commons by a party-manœuvre—Mr. Stanhope pronounces such conduct to be "disgraceful and contemptible."—Inconsistency of the Speaker—Mr. Sheridan *disinterestedly* calls on Mr. Pitt to resign—Mr. Pitt refuses to obey the call, and pledges himself to retain his place—Retrospective view of Irish affairs—Insurrection of the twenty-third of July, 1803—Committee of Papists in Dublin—Meeting of the Corporation of Dublin—Resolutions passed against the Catholic Petition—Reflections on the conduct of the Viceroy in dismissing Mr. John Giffard, for moving these resolutions—War with Spain—Debates on the subject in the House of Commons—Mr. Pitt's Speech—He proposes resolutions approving the conduct of Ministers, which are carried by three hundred and three votes against one hundred and six—Mr. Sheridan's motion for the repeal of the additional Force Act—Mr. Pitt answers him—False statement of Mr. Sheridan corrected—His motion lost—Petition of the Irish Papists for Emancipation—Intended to harass the Minister—Speech of Lord Limerick in the House of Lords—His Lordship asserts, that the Papists were goaded



on by the English Opposition to present their petition—Mr. Fox supports the petition in the Commons—Is most ably answered by Dr. Duigenan—Mr. Grattan's speech—Animadversions on the doctrine of Dr. Milner, a Papist prelate, quoted, and approved by Dr. Lawrence—Mr. Pitt opposes the motion—Acknowledges the influence of the Romish Priests in exciting rebellion in Ireland—Suggests the propriety of making such Priests stipendiaries of the state—Declares the sense of the nation to be decidedly against the prayer of the petition—Sir George Hill reprobates the petition as "a mere party-trick."—Motion rejected by three hundred and thirty-six votes against one hundred and twenty-four—Mr. Whitbread's motion against Mr. Pitt for advancing money to Boyd and Benfield—Negatived by the House—Lord Melville exposes the misconduct of the Admiralty in the House of Lords—Proceedings against his Lordship in the Commons—Impeachment of his Lordship—His acquittal by the Peers—Reflections on this proceeding; particularly on the conduct of the House of Commons, in condemning his Lordship without hearing him in his own defence, and in punishing him before he was tried—Examination of the constitutional powers of the House on judicial questions—Honourable conduct of Mr. Pitt on this occasion—Propriety of the Speaker's vote questioned—Mr. Addington created Viscount Sidmouth, and made Lord President of the Council—He demands of Mr. Pitt the office of First Lord of the Admiralty for his friend, Lord Buckinghamshire—Mr. Pitt refuses, and Lords Sidmouth and Buckinghamshire send in their resignations—On reflection they recal this hasty step—They again resign their places, and their resignations are accepted—Declining state of Mr. Pitt's health—Continental affairs—Wise and vigorous policy of Russia—Buonaparté crowned King of Italy—Renewal of hostilities in Germany—Surrender of Ulm—Battle of Austerlitz—Peace of Presburgh—Naval victory off Trafalgar—Death of Lord Nelson—Brilliant Administration of Marquis Wellesley in the East—Mr. Pitt repairs to Bath—Returns to Putney—His last illness—His death and character—Public honours paid to his memory—The House of Commons pass a vote for the payment of his debts.



## ERRATA TO VOL. VI.

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- Page 3, line 13, for "justice *and* principle," read justice *of the* principle.
- 11, — 3, *note*, for "observations," read article.
- 24, — 8, *note*, for "q'ai," read j'ai.
- 38, — 5, for "feelings," read feeling.
- 118, — 25, for "person," read persons.
- 124, — 27, for "motion," read notion.
- 180, — 8, dele "not," after "was."
- 186, — 21, for "new," read raw.
- 203, — 2, from the bottom, insert *if*," before "it."
- 264, — 25, for "on," read in.
- 273, — 27, insert *was*, after "Buonaparté."
- 275, — 16, for "this," read his.
- 282, — 23, for "Crudetta," read crude/ta.
- 304, — 2, for "India," read Egypt.
- 305, — 13, for "*he would* send," read to send.
- 316, — 12, for "Carynthia," read Carynthia.
- 323, — 1, for "Leguag," read Legnago.
- 333, — 9, for "there," read three.
- 372, — 5, after "taken," insert were guilty.
- 397, before "treated," insert he.
- 418, line 6, for "course," read cause.
- 422, — 20, after "did," insert not.
- 427, — 4, before "as," insert to.
- 459, — 21, for "that being who in his," read God, whose.
- — 22, dele "which."
- 461, — 14, before "facts," insert no.
- 465, *note*, for "acceding," read according.
- 485, line 10, dele "been."
- 490, — 6, for "did not take," read "took."
- 508, — 8, for "acquisitions," read acquisition.
- 528, — 25, after "that," insert which.
- 529, — 11, for "that," read fact.
- 636, — 8, for "in," read during.
- 647, — 19, for "reign," read sign.
- 650, — 11, insert "*it was*," after "government."
- 654, — 8, for "prier," read puer.
- 672, — 18, for "opposing," read approving.
- 697, — 4, for "memorable," read memorabile.
- 730, — 14, for "farical," read farcical.
- 735, *note*, for "coalitions," read coalition.



POLITICAL

LIFE OF MR. PITT

CHAPTER XLII

The first of the two great questions which  
arose in the mind of the nation, was  
whether the Government should continue to  
support the French Republic, or whether  
it should withdraw its support. The  
Government, however, continued to support  
the French Republic, and the nation  
followed its lead. The French Republic  
was the only power in Europe which  
was not a monarchy, and it was the  
only power which was not a despotism.  
The French Republic was the only power  
which was not a monarchy, and it was  
the only power which was not a despotism.  
The French Republic was the only power  
which was not a monarchy, and it was  
the only power which was not a despotism.



THE  
POLITICAL  
LIFE OF MR. PITT.

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CHAPTER XLII.

Effects of the Victory of the Nile--- Confidence in the Minister increased--- Lenient measures of Lord Cornwallis, the new Viceroy of Ireland, carried to excess--- Peace of the Country still disturbed by the Rebels--Address to the Viceroy, complimenting him at the expence of his Predecessor---Prudent conduct of Lord Cornwallis on the occasion---His Speech on the prorogation of Parliament in 1798---Justly characterizes the late Rebellion--- Praises the vigorous policy of Lord Camden---Ascribes the fury of the Rebels to religious motives--- Continental affairs--- Spirited Manifesto of the Porte---Acknowledges the vast importance of the victory in the Mediterranean--- Unfolds the spirit of French policy with equal force, ability, and truth---The Turks make active preparations for war--- Favourable disposition of the Northern powers --- Foreign policy of Mr. Pitt at this conjuncture--- Endeavours to form a new Confederacy against France--- Treaty concluded with the Emperor of Russia---French affairs---Continuance of the Reign of Terror---Severity of Military Conscriptions--- False account of the Battle of the Nile in a French official paper---The Directory



disclaim all knowledge of the Expedition to Egypt---  
 Their perfidy and duplicity exposed in their commu-  
 nications with the Porte---Contradiction between their  
 declarations and those of Ruffin, their Ambassador, at  
 Constantinople---Ruffin produces a Letter, avowing the  
 object of the Expedition to Egypt to be the punishment  
 of the Beys for injuries committed on Frenchmen---  
 Talleyrand denies this to the Turkish Ambassador, at  
 Paris, and declares the conquest of Malta to be the sole  
 object of the Expedition---Falsehoods contained in the  
 French Manifesto proved by the intercepted letters from  
 the French army in Egypt---The Military conscription  
 extended to the conquered countries---Partial insurrections  
 in the Netherlands---Insolence of Garat, the French Envoy  
 at Naples---Demands the release of all Traitors, imprisoned  
 for their crimes---The King of Naples prepares for war---  
 Enters the Roman Territory---Is defeated at Porto  
 Fornio---Concludes an armistice with the French---  
 Leaves his Capital, and retires to Sicily---Popular tumults  
 excited by the French at Naples---A revolution effected  
 on French principles---The Neapolitan Republic pro-  
 claimed---Meeting of Parliament---The King's Speech---  
 Thanks voted to Nelson and his followers---The Admiral  
 is created **BARON NELSON OF THE NILE**---Committee  
 of Supply---Mr. Pitt details the expences of the coming  
 year, and the means of providing for them---Flourishing  
 state of Commerce---Large increase of Exports and  
 Imports---Mr. Pitt adverts to the frauds which had been  
 practised to defeat the project of the Triple Assessment---  
 Proposes a new scheme of Finance---The Tax upon  
 Income---Measures proposed for rendering it effective---  
 Powers of Commissioners under the Act---Reflections on  
 the multiplication of Oaths occasioned by the Revenue  
 Laws---Estimated amount of the Tax, ten millions---  
 Grounds of that Estimate---Advantages of raising a large



portion of the Supplies within the year---The energy of  
 the Parliament the cause of National prosperity---Mr.  
 Pitt confutes the notion that a Commercial people cannot  
 be a Warlike people---Pronounces an eulogy on the  
 British Constitution---Mr. Tierney opposes the Tax---  
 Resolutions proposed by Mr. Pitt carried without a divi-  
 sion---Remarks on the unequal operation of the Tax  
 upon Income---Farther debates on the subject---The Bill  
 opposed by Sir John Sinclair, Sir Francis Baring, and  
 Mr. William Smith---The fallacy of Sir John Sinclair's  
 arguments exposed---Mr. Pitt justifies the Tax---Com-  
 ments on the inconsistency of Mr. Smith in admitting  
 the justice and principle, and opposing every mea-  
 sure for carrying it into effect---Corrects his mistatements  
 on the distinctions of society---Reprobates all new-fangled  
 notions respecting *Equality*---Proves Mr. Smith's argu-  
 ments to extend to an equal distribution of property---  
 Defends the Bill from the imputation of establishing a  
*Tithe*---Explains the difference between *Tithe* and the  
 contribution of a Tenth part of Income to be levied by the  
 Act---Argument examined relative to the different effects  
 of the Tax on permanent and on temporary estates---  
 The Bill passes the Commons---Is opposed in the Lords  
 by the Duke of Bedford, and Lords Suffolk and Holland---  
 Manly conduct of Lord Grenville---Mistaken position of  
 Lord Holland---Assertion of the Duke of Bedford  
 respecting Tithes contradicted by the Chancellor---Bill  
 passed into a Law---Farther Supplies---New Taxes---  
 Subsidy to Russia---Opposed by Mr. Tierney---Mr. Pitt  
 repels the conclusions drawn by Mr. Tierney regarding  
 the object of the war, and the intentions of the Cabinet---  
 Reflections on the evil tendency of the writings of the  
 French Economists and Philosophists---The inconsistency  
 of Mr. Tierney's arguments detected, and the confusion  
 of his ideas exposed, by Mr. Pitt---Mr. Pitt draws a just



character of the French Republic---Seditious Societies---  
 Papers respecting them referred to a Secret Committee---  
 Report of that Committee---It unfolds a complicated scene  
 of sedition and treason---Plan, and object, of the Societies,  
 to establish a Democratic Republic in Great Britain with  
 the assistance of France---Their Address to the French  
 Directory---The London Corresponding Society abandon  
 the project of annual Parliaments, and universal suffrage,  
 for still more Revolutionary schemes---United Irishmen  
 form Societies in England---Administer unlawful Oaths---  
 Many of them enter the Naval service---Plans for mur-  
 dering their officers, and for carrying their ships into an  
 enemy's port---Swear to murder the Protestants---Plan for  
 exciting an insurrection in London---and for seizing,  
 at the same moment, the two Houses of Parliament,  
 the Tower, and the Bank---Mr. Pitt introduces two Bills,  
 one for renewing the Bill to enable the King to detain  
 persons suspected of Treason, and another for the sup-  
 pression of Seditious Societies---Proposes to empower the  
 King to imprison such persons in any one of his Gaols---  
 Members of Secret Societies rendered liable to fine,  
 imprisonment, or transportation, according to the nature  
 of their offence---Proprietors of houses at which such  
 Societies are held subjected to a fine---All lectures and  
 discussions at which money is taken for admission pro-  
 hibited---Printers compelled to affix their names to hand-  
 bills---All presses to be registered---These Bills passed  
 into Laws.

[1798-1799.] The victory of the Nile, and  
 the success which had generally attended his  
 Majesty's arms, as well in the annoyance of his  
 enemies abroad, as in the suppression of a most



dangerous rebellion at home, had, while they raised our reputation, and increased our influence with the cabinets of the Continent, induced the nation to repose great confidence in the Minister. After the rebels of Ireland had been subdued, the system of lenity which the Viceroy had been led to believe would effectually restore permanent tranquillity to that distracted country, was not only adopted with zeal, but carried to such an excess, that rebel-chiefs were seen strutting about the streets of the capital, and insulting those loyal subjects whose blood had been shed in resisting their treasonable attempts, or who had lost their nearest relatives, and dearest friends, in the sanguinary conflict. Notwithstanding, however, the display of this spirit of conciliation, the peace of the country, and the security of its inhabitants, were still subject to frequent interruptions from the depredations of rebels, who, more formidable for their audacity, than their numbers, contrived to elude the active vigilance of the troops. Meanwhile, the members of that party which had uniformly opposed every attempt to suppress the rebellion, or to punish the rebels, encouraged, no doubt, by the liberal indulgence of the government, procured an address to be presented to the Viceroy, by one of the companies of Dublin, in which his **Excellency** was complimented, at the expence of



His predecessor. By bestowing commendations on those lenient measures which Lord Cornwallis had deemed it expedient to pursue, it was evidently meant to condemn the vigorous policy of Lord Camden. But the insidious attempt failed to produce the desired effect, for the Viceroy, in his answer, with equal truth and judgment, ascribed his ability to adopt those measures, which were now so loudly praised, to the firm and resolute proceedings to which recourse had been previously had for bringing the rebellion to a speedy termination. The same judgment was displayed by the Lord-Lieutenant, in his speech on the prorogation of Parliament, on the 6th of October, when, adverting to the late situation of the kingdom, he observed, "The foulest and darkest conspiracy was formed, and long carried on by the implacable enemy of these realms, *for the total extinction of the constitution, and for the separation of his Majesty's kingdom of Ireland from Great Britain.* By the unremitting vigilance of my predecessor in this government, the treason had been detected; the apprehension of the principal conspirators, and *the salutary measures wisely adopted*, checked its progress; and, through your sagacious diligence, it has been developed in all its parts, and traced to all its sources. A dangerous and wicked rebellion, the consequence of that conspiracy, has been, in a great measure, subdued.



“Religion, that greatest comfort and support of mankind, has been most wickedly perverted to the purpose of influencing the worst of passions; and the vilest arts have been used to persuade the ignorant and unwary, that, in a *reign which has been marked by a series of indulgences to all sects of Christians*, it is the intention of his Majesty's government to oppress and even to extirpate, that description of his Majesty's subjects, who have received repeated and recent marks of its favour and protection.

This direct and positive approbation of the system pursued by Lord Camden, and which was so strongly reprobated, at the time, by all the leading members of Opposition, in both countries, coming from a nobleman who was universally praised by the Romanists for his conduct, and who certainly was never accused of supporting any system of unnecessary vigour, ought to carry with it particular weight. The Viceroy also paid a tribute of justice to the regulars, militia, fencibles, and yeomanry of Ireland, which amply confuted all the vile calumnies with which their characters had long been assailed by the leaders, the agents, and the emissaries, of faction.

But though Lord Cornwallis extended the spirit of concession, in some instances, farther than even prudence or policy could justify, yet,



the peculiar circumstances of the times, and more especially, the grand object of his mission, sanctioned a line of conduct, which, at any other period, would have been not only unjustifiable, but productive of the worst effects. Before, however, a particular account of the subject here alluded to is given, it will be necessary briefly to state the effect which the grand victory, recently gained in the Mediterranean, had on the spirits and the proceedings of the different powers of the continent.

The Grand Seignior, who was more immediately affected by it, as it gave a fatal blow to those perfidious allies of his, who, under treacherous professions of friendship, had invaded his territory in time of peace, and had pursued a conduct which evinced the most inveterate spirit of enmity, was the first to express his grateful acknowledgements for the benefits which he, individually, must receive from it. In a spirited manifesto, which he published soon after the event, he declared this victory to have been of essential service to his empire, and to be deserving of public acknowledgement. In the paper in question, he displayed a justness of conception, a soundness of judgment, and a fund of good sense, which had very seldom been manifested by any of the European powers. He formed a just estimate of the conduct of the French, and



exposed their hypocrisy, ambition, and perfidy, in the clearest and strongest point of view. In one short sentence the policy of the Directory was ably characterized—" *Blinded by pride and vanity, they have forgotten every thing which is called principle, and not a word which they utter is entitled to belief. Their arbitrary measures of violence have no other object than to loosen the bands of union in all nations ; for which purpose they have recourse both to secret arts, and to open fire and sword. They mean to erect, in all parts, weak republics, which France can rule, and thus to enslave the world.*"\* Hence it clearly appears, that the ministers of the Porte had acquired a more accurate knowledge of the tyrants of the Luxembourg, than had been obtained by many of the experienced statesmen who guided the reins of empire on the Continent. But the Turks did not confine themselves to strong expressions, they displayed a resolution to call all their resources into action, and to direct them against the common enemy.

The King of Naples, threatened with destruction by the dangerous approximation of the French armies to his dominions, since the

\* This masterly State Paper was dated the 11th Sept. 1798, and was communicated to the British Minister at the Porte.



seizure of Rome, was encouraged, by the success of the British arms, to prepare for a spirited, and vigorous resistance.

The most favourable disposition was, also, manifested both by Austria and Russia, to resist any farther encroachments of the French republic, and to unite, for the purpose of affording effectual protection to the rest of Europe. The foreign policy observed by Mr. Pitt, at this critical period, had, for its object, to fix the wavering, to confirm the steady, and to cement the common bond, which he had the most sanguine hopes of being able to form, by every honourable means in his power. He had established a confidential communication with the cabinet of St. Petersburg, and the emperor Paul, whose chivalrous disposition readily embraced any grand and extraordinary project, had agreed to send a formidable force to act against the French; and an army of twenty-three thousand men had actually begun its march to join the emperor of Germany, as auxiliaries. Five and forty thousand men were destined to join the Prussian monarch, in case he should be induced, by the joint solicitations of the British and Russian cabinets, to join the new confederacy against the common enemy of Europe. Austria, emboldened by a promise of support from this country, and convinced that nothing but disgrace



was to be reaped from the tedious and abortive negotiations at Rastadt, only consented to prolong the farce, until she should be fully prepared for the renewal of hostile operations. Thus the spirit of the British minister, wisely directing the extensive resources of his country, and ably seconded by the matchless skill and invincible prowess of her naval commanders, infused fresh vigour into the councils of the continental powers, and prepared them for farther attempts to vindicate their violated rights, and to defend their threatened independence.

In the mean time, the French Directory, elated with the success of their arms on the European continent, sought to diminish the effect of the destruction of their fleet at Aboukir,\* by

\* In one of the official papers of the Directory, *le Directeur* of the 25th of Sept. appeared the following observations on the victory of the Nile, which forms an admirable contrast in all its parts with the manifesto of the Porte, before cited. "The valour of the English, which so many poor creatures delight to celebrate, consists in nothing more than overpowering their enemies by *superiority of numbers*. Nelson, reinforced by every traitor, after adding to his own squadron squadrons still more numerous, attacked the French on board their ships lying at anchor in an open road. The Britons, emboldened by a *stupid* superiority, could not fail to be successful. But the vanquished fought like the three hundred Spartans, and Nelson was little more than Xerxes overwhelming a handful of soldiers by the weight of his army. In point of glory and



magnifying their conquests in Egypt, and by holding out the most magnificent projects of aggrandizement and advantage to the deluded people. Always bent on putting an end to the

renown—on which side was the hero? To burn ships is a puny trick, which bespeaks weakness. It is but a hypocritical victory. Compare such ridiculous victories with the formidable bravery of those fifteen hundred brave men, who lately gained so many palms and laurels. See Ireland ranged, in the day of battle, on the side of the republic, for the purpose of opening to our battalions all the roads to London, and of hurling punishment on the Bey of Albion, over the dead bodies of his shop and counting-house warriors." In the same paper, a few days after, the following questions were asked, with a view to shew that no bad consequences could result to the French, from the destruction of their fleet. "Can the victory of Nelson prevent, or even retard, the happy consequences of the expedition, committed to the unfortunate Brueys? If it was the object of that expedition to annoy and cut off one of the principal sources of British prosperity, will not the cannon of the Tower of London, announcing with so much fracas that victory, be the harbinger and passing-bell of ruin to English commerce in India? Is not Nelson the Xerxes, who, with his numerous army, defeated the three hundred Spartans, and burnt Athens? But Themistocles flourished, and Xerxes was destroyed. If Brueys, like Leonidas, preferred death to a dishonourable capitulation, have we not another Themistocles to avenge the blood of so many heroes? And does not Nelson himself owe his immortality to the glory of the vanquished, rather than to his actions?" It required all the sagacity of a republican Frenchman to discover one trait of resemblance between the Athenian hero, and the Corsican tyrant; between Themistocles, the champion of liberty, and Buonaparté, the bravo of despotism.



congress at Rastadt, as soon as it should suit their convenience; and having completed the revolutions of Rome and Switzerland; they made every effort to strengthen their armies, in order to strike a decisive blow in Germany. They had recourse, for this purpose, to all the tyrannical measures which had been introduced by the founders of the republic; young men were forcibly wrested from their distressed families, and sent in chains to the frontiers. Two hundred thousand of these victims of anarchy were decreed to be added to the force already established.

The exposure of the conduct of the Directory to the Turkish government, in the manifesto already noticed, gave great uneasiness to these republican tyrants. The Turks, there, truly asserted, that the neutrality of the Porte, during the war, had been highly advantageous to the French. They contended that, in return, for such forbearance, the French ought to have been particularly careful to preserve peace; but, instead of this, they began to devise various pretences for interrupting the tranquillity of other nations. Under an illusive idea of liberty, as it was called, but which, in fact, was nothing more than an assumed right to subvert every established government, to abolish all religion, to plunder all property, to dissolve human society



itself, they employed themselves in misleading, and imposing upon, the ignorant vulgar, pretending to reduce mankind to the state of the brute creation, and for no other purpose than to promote their own private interests, and to render the government permanent in their own hands.

Actuated by such principles, they made it their maxim to stir up and corrupt, indiscriminately, the subjects of every power, whether distant or near, either at peace or at war, and to excite them to revolt against their natural sovereigns, and lawful government. Whilst, on the one hand, their minister at Constantinople, pursuant to their general system of duplicity and deceit, professed great friendship for the Porte, endeavouring to make it the dupe of their insidious projects, and to accomplish their object of exciting it against other friendly powers, the commanders and general of their army in Italy, on the other hand, were engaged in the honest attempt of perverting the minds of the subjects of the Grand Seignior, by sending notorious agents into Anatolia, the Morea, and the islands of the Archipelago; and by the circulation of insulting manifestoes, particularly of one addressed by Buonaparté to the people of Macrio.

When remonstrances and complaints were made to the Directory on this gross infraction of the alliance subsisting between the two powers,



the Directory disavowed all knowledge of the transactions, declared that the generals had acted without orders from them, that all cause of offence should be carefully avoided, and that it was their wish to strengthen, more and more, the bonds of friendship which subsisted between France and the Porte. The generals, however, still persevered in their treacherous conduct, and it became so notorious that they acted in obedience to instructions from the government, that it was deemed useless to prefer any farther complaints.

The Grand Seignior farther observed, that, in spite of their formal renunciation of all schemes of conquest, the French had not only retained countries which they had subdued during the war, but had completely thrown off the mask, and, unfolding their secret views, had attacked, without reason or justice, independent states, who had, like the Porte itself, observed the strictest neutrality; invading their territories, when least provided with the means of defence, and subjecting them to their will by open force and hostility.

Thus, having thrown off all controul, and laid aside all regard to decency, and all appearance of decorum, unmindful alike of the rights of nations, and the obligation of treaties; and, as if desirous to convince the world that, in their



eyes, friendship and enmity were the same thing, they made, in a manner altogether unprecedented, like a band of pirates, a sudden irruption into Egypt, the most precious of the Turkish provinces, and took forcible possession of the country, at a time when they had experienced nothing from the Porte but demonstrations of friendship.

When the Turks first heard the report of this invasion, they had a conference with the French Envoy, Ruffin ; he declared he had no knowledge of any such event, but he gave it as his opinion, that, if such a project was in contemplation, it could only be intended to inflict vengeance on the Beys, and to attack the English settlements in the east. It was then distinctly stated to him, that the smallest attempt, on the part of the French, upon Cairo, on whatever pretext it might be founded, would be considered as a declaration of war, and, as such, would be resented by the Porte ;—That the Ottoman empire would not suffer a handful of sand to be taken from their Egyptian territory ; that every Mussulman would fly to arms for the deliverance of those blessed lands ; and that if the chastisement of the Beys of Egypt were necessary, it belonged only to the Sublime Porte to inflict it, as they were her dependants ; that the interference of the French in this busi-



ness was inconsistent with the rights of nations, that the court of Great Britain, being the dearest friend of the Ottoman empire, the Porte would never consent to the passage of French troops through her territory, to act against the British settlements; and that, in short, should even their expedition to Egypt have no other object than this, it would be equally regarded as a declaration of war; and Ruffin was expressly charged to state this to the Directory in these very words. Dispatches were, at the same time, sent to the Turkish ambassador at Paris, directing him to make the same communication, and to require explanations on the subject.

This firm conduct on the part of the Porte drew from Ruffin the communication of a letter written some time before, but stated by him to have been received subsequently to this conference, in which the expedition to Egypt was avowed, and its object was stated to be to secure certain commercial advantages, by bringing the Beys to an account, and to injure Great Britain. It was also said, that an ambassador had been appointed to submit certain propositions to the Porte, favourable to her interests, and to adjust the affair in question; with the farther ridiculous intimation, that, were the Porte to declare war on this account, both courts would expose themselves to attack on the part of the emperor.—



This communication was made officially, and a copy of the letter was left with the Turkish minister.

The delay in the receipt or delivery of this letter gave rise to a curious scene at Paris. For, when the Ottoman ambassador, in conformity with his instructions, demanded the proper explanation from Talleyrand, then secretary for foreign affairs, that minister, either supposing that the letter was lost, or wishing to deceive the ambassador, did not hesitate to disavow, in the most positive manner, the expedition against Egypt, and to assert, unequivocally, that Buonaparte's commission was limited to the conquest of Malta; observing, at the same time, that, the abolition of the order there being a measure conducive to the benefit of all the Turks, the Porte ought even to acknowledge it as an obligation. Talleyrand added, that the Directory had nothing more at heart than the maintenance of that peace which had existed between France and the Porte from time immemorial, and more and more to strengthen the ties which bound them to each other;—thus, as the Turkish cabinet observed, exhibiting a scene of the most artful duplicity; the glaring contradiction between the assurances of Ruffin, and that of Talleyrand, both of them *official*, being evidently a fresh artifice to mislead the Porte, and to gain time



till they should receive intelligence of the issue of their attempt upon Egypt, which had not yet arrived. The Turks justly regarded such conduct as a demonstration that the French Directory, in the attempt to execute their plans of ambition, had chosen to lay aside all respect for those laws which were observed and maintained by every regular government, and that no faith whatever was to be placed in their professions and promises. And they drew the natural conclusion, from the whole tenor of the arbitrary proceedings, and despotic conduct, of the French government, that their project was to banish every orderly institution from the face of the world; to overturn human society; and, by the alternate employment of force and intrigue, to subvert the constitution of every established independent state, by creating, (as they had done in Italy) a number of small republics, of which the French was to be the parent, and so to render their own will universally predominant over all law.

It was not to be supposed that a paper, breathing such manly sentiments, speaking such strong language, and proclaiming such bold truths, would be viewed with indifference by the irritable rulers of the French people. Finding every effort to deceive the Turks fruitless, they at length, (in November, 1798) published an



answer to their manifesto, in the *Moniteur*.— In this curious document, the Directory, totally evading the only true points of the question at issue, ridiculously asked, whether Egypt could be considered as valuable to the Grand Seignior? A country, they said, of which the chiefs were independent; and where his bashaw, an officer merely nominal and honorary, was either suffered to remain in a state of insignificancy and contempt, or else was sent back to Constantinople at the pleasure of the Beys? But, if the Turkish ministry could be supposed to be unacquainted with the conduct of the Beys towards the Porte, could they be ignorant of their deportment, for many years, towards France? In violation of the rights of nations, they had, it was pretended, plundered and oppressed all the French who were in Egypt, whether sojourners, or settled in the country; and the French merchants had made fruitless applications for protection to the Sublime Porte, in conformity with existing treaties. The Beys were charged with having sacrificed those treaties to private engagements, which they had contracted with England, to harass, oppress, and annihilate the commerce which France carried on with Egypt. Ought their open hostilities to be any longer tolerated with impunity? The Directory would be guilty of a flagrant breach of their solemn



engagement to exercise a vigilant care for *the protection of private property*, as well as of public rights and interests, were they not to repel such barefaced aggressions, and make just reprisals. It was not, they insisted, at Constantinople that the blow given to the Beys in Egypt should be reprobated, but at London; inasmuch as in striking at the Mamelukes, the French government had aimed a blow at England, with which the Beys had made common cause, as appeared from a letter which, it was asserted, (without any foundation) had been sent by them to Admiral Nelson, before the battle of Aboukir; in which letter they had stated, to the Admiral, that he had only to destroy the French fleet, and that they themselves would take care to cut the French troops in pieces whenever they should land.

In the first place, the fact urged to prove the convention between the Beys of Egypt and the Cabinet of Great Britain, (which existed only in the manifestoes of the Directory) had not the smallest foundation in truth. When Lord Nelson, then in quest of the French, first touched at Alexandria, the Egyptians had heard nothing whatever of the French; of course, the Beys could not make any such communication to him. And when he returned to Egypt, in consequence of the intelligence which he had



received from a Greek Governor, the French were in possession of the port of Alexandria, and no communication whatever with the shore took place, previous to the action; as the whole time, which was but short, from the period of the discovery of the French fleet, to the commencement of the battle, was employed in the necessary preparations for the dreadful conflict. When one falsehood is advanced in justification of an unjust proceeding, it mostly becomes necessary to support it by others. But, admitting even the truth of the French statement, that the conduct of the Beys, to Frenchmen resident in Egypt had been improper, and even oppressive, did that afford them any right to invade a territory belonging to a neutral power and an ally, in order to inflict vengeance on the offenders? Was it not consistent with the uniform practice of governments, as well as conformable to the spirit and the letter of the law of nations, to make application for redress to the *Sovereign*?—The Beys were vassals or tributaries, to the Porte, who claimed, and who possessed, the right of Sovereignty in Egypt. The French government, too, were in alliance with the Porte; therefore, every motive of duty combined with every rule of practice, and every obligation of treaty, to proscribe and condemn every other mode of proceeding than a regular application



to the Ottoman government, accompanied by a demand of satisfaction for injuries sustained. But the truth was, that no injury whatever had been sustained by the French; that the whole manifesto of the Directory was a tissue of profligate falsehoods, without a single fact to support it, well-calculated indeed to impose on the credulity of those hapless beings over whom they exercised a despotic sway, but utterly unqualified to stand the test of impartial examination. It was extended to a great length, and went, in substance, to persuade the world, that the Turks had no cause for complaint against the French, who were their faithful friends and good allies; and that the majority of the Divan were influenced by British gold to act in opposition to the interests of their country. It was not found convenient to notice the very important fact of the conversation which had passed between Talleyrand and Ali-Effendi, the Turkish Ambassador at Paris. And the Directory little expected, that the most complete contradiction of all their assertions would very soon be supplied by their own commanders and emissaries. In fact, the letters from Egypt, which were intercepted towards the close of the year 1798, and were, in part, published by the British government, contain the fullest and most unimpeachable evidence of the base perfidy of



the Directory, and of the utter contempt of truth displayed in all their public communications. In short, there exists the testimony of the leader of this expedition to the fact, that the French meant to assume the Sovereignty of Egypt, and to retain possession of it as a French Colony.\*

The Directory, however, were now in full possession of supreme power, and the people were

\* “Vous savez,” says Buonaparté to Kleber, in a letter addressed to him at the moment when he deserted his post and fled from Egypt—“apprécier aussi bien que moi, Citoyen Général, *combien la possession de L’Egypte est importante à la France.*” At the same time, the wily Corsican earnestly intreats his more honest successor to persevere in the same system of hypocrisy and falsehood, which he had uniformly pursued himself—“*persistez toujours dans l’assertion, que q’ai avancée, QUE L’INTENTION DE LA FRANCE N’A JAMAIS ETE D’ENLEVER L’EGYPTE A LA PORTE.*” See *Lettres de l’armée en Egypte, au Gouvernement François, interceptées par la Corvette de S. M. B. el Vincejo, dans la Méditerranée. Publiées par Autorité*, pp. 6, 7. Poussielgue, a confidential officer, who was paymaster to the French army, and superintendant of the finances of Egypt, speaks more plainly in his letter to the Executive Directory, in which he gives them a tolerably fair account of the state of Egypt. “Quand nous sommes débarqués, les Egyptiens out cru, comme nous le leur disions, que c’étoit d’accord avec le Grand Seigneur; ils se sont soumis avec plus de docilité: a présent, ils sont bien convaincus du contraire; ceux qui paroissant nous servir se croient, *par notre MENSONGE*, autorisés á nous trahir, &c. Ibid. p. 59.



placed in such an abject state, as to see only with *their* eyes, and to hear only with *their* ears. A military conscription was enforced, with accustomed severity, and every means taken to increase the army, with all possible expedition. Nor were these arbitrary measures confined solely to France herself,—they were extended, with equal rigour, to the conquered countries, which she had annexed to her dominions. In the Low Countries, in particular, the most rigorous and tyrannical means were adopted for bringing the inhabitants into the French ranks, and their property into the French treasury. Churches and monasteries were pillaged; the priests were proscribed, banished, or executed; and requisitions of every kind were employed to reduce the people to poverty, wretchedness, and despair. Their sufferings were such, that they had recourse to arms, without the smallest prospect of success. A partial insurrection took place, which was almost immediately quelled, and only served as a pretext for the infliction of fresh injuries.

The King of Naples, as has been already stated, had prepared himself to resist the expected incursions of the French into his territory.—With means, however, not adequate to the task which he undertook to accomplish, he began his attack on the troops stationed in the



new Roman Republic, after issuing a proclamation, in which he promised to emancipate the people of Rome from the yoke of France.— But, previous to this hostile movement, his Sicilian Majesty had received from the Republican Ambassador, at his Court, pretty strong indications of the revolutionary designs which the Directory had formed upon his Crown and Kingdom. This man, Garat, who was one of the regicides, had insolently demanded the release of all persons confined, for sedition or treason, in the Neapolitan dominions; and had made a compliance with this extraordinary demand the condition of continued amity between the two nations. The King, therefore, had only to chuse between unqualified submission, and determined resistance; and the alternative which he preferred was highly laudable, although his means were inadequate.

The first action took place at Porto Fornio, where the French obtained a complete victory. The Neapolitans retreated to Civita Castellana, where they were joined by a fresh body of troops, under the Austrian General Mack.— But, though surrounded with strong entrenchments, they gave way to the French, under General Macdonald, who compelled them, after various engagements, to fall back upon Capua.



While preparations were making for the siege of this fortress, the Neapolitan Peasantry, who had taken up arms, obtained various advantages over different detachments of the French army, and harassed the enemy so much that they were reduced to the greatest difficulties. At this critical juncture, Commissioners arrived at the French Camp from Naples, with whom the French General Championnet gladly concluded an armistice, on the condition that Capua, with all its stores and artillery, should be surrendered to the French, together with the whole tract of country from thence to Acerra, in the vicinity of Naples. Some farther territorial advantages were ceded to the French by this treaty, who were also to receive ten millions of livres, about four hundred and sixteen thousand pounds sterling. This armistice was signed on the 21st of January, 1799. The King of Naples had left his capital at the beginning of the month, and had reached Sicily in safety, on board Admiral Nelson's ship.

The armistice afforded an opportunity to the French commander, Championnet, to bring into action those revolutionary resources which he had assured the Directory he had taken special care to secure. Popular tumults were immediately excited in the capital of the kingdom ;—the French faction prevailed; Cham-



pionnet, in violation of the treaty, marched to their aid; forced the passes which guard the entrance to Naples; took possession of the city; secured all the forts; disarmed the inhabitants; and announced the revolution of the kingdom, in a proclamation, in which he told the Neapolitans, that they were at length free; that their liberty was the only reward which France claimed from its conquest; and the only clause of the treaty of peace which the army of the republic had just solemnly sworn, together with themselves, within the walls of their capital, and on the ruins of the Throne of their last King.

All who regretted the loss of a King were represented as maniacs; and all who rejected proffered liberty were regarded as unworthy of protection, and fit only to be *cut off*! On the ruins of the monarchy was erected *the Neapolitan Republic*, and the Government was vested in a provisional assembly of twenty-one Citizens, subject to the superintendence and controul of the French General. These events took place within five days from the conclusion of the armistice, and they were followed by all the customary effects of such revolutions, general confiscation and plunder. Soon after this, the revolutionary mania of the French extended itself even to the little Republic of Lucca, whose Con-



stitution, which had resisted the shocks of two centuries and a half, was overthrown, and a new Government, with the modern appendages of a Directory and two Councils, established in its stead.

Such was the state of the Continent in the autumn of 1798. Mr. Pitt had exerted himself to give a favourable direction to the stimulus produced by the victory of the Nile. The British Ambassador, at foreign courts, had received instructions to assure the respective powers to whom they were accredited, and who evinced any disposition to resist the encroachments of France, of the most potent and effectual assistance which it was in the power of this country to afford. On the twentieth of November, 1798, the British Parliament met. In the speech from the Throne, the King, adverting to the battle of the Nile, which was truly represented as a great and brilliant victory, observed that, by it, an enterprize, of which the injustice, perfidy, and extravagance, had fixed the attention of the world, and which was peculiarly directed against some of the most valuable interests of the British empire, had, in the first instance, been turned to the confusion of its authors; and the blow thus given to the power and influence of France, had afforded an opening which, if improved by suitable exer-



tions on the part of other powers, might lead to the general deliverance of Europe. Reference was made to the wisdom and magnanimity displayed, at this conjuncture, by the Emperor of Russia, and to the decision and vigour of the Ottoman Porte, as having shewn that those powers were impressed with a just sense of the present crisis; and their example, joined to the disposition manifested, almost universally, in the different countries, struggling under the yoke of France, was considered as a powerful encouragement to adopt that vigorous line of conduct, which experience had proved to be alone consistent with security or honour.

The address experienced but little resistance in either House; thanks and suitable rewards were voted to the gallant Nelson, and his brave followers, and to the Admiral was given a title, calculated to carry the recollection of his heroic achievement to the remotest posterity. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile. On the third of December, Mr. Pitt entered upon the most unpleasant, but not the least necessary, part of a Minister's duty, the detail of means necessary to be provided for the grand exigences of the war. The whole expences of the coming year were stated to be £29,272,000. To meet this demand, the land and malt tax would supply £2,750,000; the lottery £200,000; the



growing produce of the consolidated fund, £1,500,000; and the tax upon imports and exports, £1,700,000; making a total of £6,150,000, and leaving, of course, upwards of twenty-three millions to be provided for by other means.

In alluding to the duty on imports and exports, Mr. Pitt observed, that it had greatly exceeded the sum at which he had originally rated it; and that the total amount of the imports and exports of the year exceeded, in a large degree, the largest sum at which any man had ever ventured to compute it.\* In considering the means of providing for the deficit of

\* Mr. Rose, in a table annexed to "a brief examination into the increase of the revenue, commerce, and manufactures of Great Britain, from 1792 to 1799," which he published in the latter year, and which was the result of an elaborate investigation of the subject by some gentlemen connected with the administration, and who were well qualified for the task, thus rates the amount of imports and exports, from 1791 to 1799.

| IMPORTS.                   |            |                                    | EXPORTS.                   |            |
|----------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Imports<br>In the year     |            | Foreign and Co-<br>lonial Produce. | British Manu-<br>factures. | Total.     |
| 1792                       | 19,659,000 | 1792 6,129,000                     | 18,336,000                 | 24,465,000 |
| 1793                       | 19,256,000 | 1793 5,784,000                     | 13,892,000                 | 19,676,000 |
| 1794                       | 22,288,000 | 1794 8,386,000                     | 16,725,000                 | 25,111,000 |
| 1795                       | 22,736,000 | 1795 8,509,000                     | 16,527,000                 | 25,036,000 |
| 1796                       | 23,187,000 | 1796 8,923,000                     | 19,102,000                 | 28,025,000 |
| 1797                       | 21,013,000 | 1797 9,412,000                     | 16,903,000                 | 26,315,000 |
| 1798                       | 27,857,000 | 1798 10,617,000                    | 19,672,000                 | 30,289,000 |
| Average of<br>these 7 yrs. | 22,285,000 | Avge. 8,251,000                    | 17,308,000                 | 25,559,000 |



twenty-three millions, Mr. Pitt reminded the House of the two fundamental principles which had been established, during the debates on the assessed taxes, in the preceding session, as the rule by which they were to be guided in providing for the supplies of the year. These were, first, to reduce the total amount to be raised by a loan; and next, as far as it was not reducible, to reduce it to such a limit, that no more loan should be raised, than a temporary tax should defray within a limited time. It was upon these principles that the House had proceeded in providing for the public exigences of the preceding year. But, it appeared, that the produce of the assessed taxes had fallen very far short of the original estimate. But the deficit, occasioned by the frauds which had been practised for the evasion of that impost, had been fully supplied by the public spirit of the country, as displayed in the extent of the voluntary contributions. The meanness which shrunk from fair and equal contribution had been compensated to the public by the spontaneous exertions of patriotism. Mr. Pitt, after the admission of various modifications, had rated the produce of the assessed taxes at four millions and a half; and, although they had been most scandalously evaded, they had yielded four millions; while the voluntary contributions



already exceeded two millions. If he did not calculate the evasion, the fraud, and the meanness which had struggled to defeat the operation of the assessed taxes, Mr. Pitt said, he mentioned it with shame, at a moment like the present, in a contest so awfully interesting to every individual, and to the nation, there had been men base enough to avail themselves of the general *modifications* which were intended to relieve those who might have been called upon to contribute beyond their means, to avoid that fair assessment which corresponded with their circumstances, he was happy to find that the honour of the nation had been vindicated by the noble and generous aid of voluntary contribution, which had greatly exceeded the sum which he had stated.

The House having sanctioned the principle of raising a large proportion of the supplies within the year, by a system of taxation, which should make every man contribute to the wants of the State, according to his means; and having found the inadequacy of the mode last adopted for carrying that principle into effect, they were now called upon by the Minister to adopt a different mode, more operative in its effect, and less subject to evasion. Mr. Pitt proceeded to show, that whatever benefit this principle was calculated to bestow,



might, by a liberal, fair, and efficient, application, be carried to an extent far greater than had yet been obtained; an extent equal to every object of great and magnanimous effort, to every purpose of national safety and glory, to every advantage of permanent credit, and of increased prosperity.

In order to accomplish this desirable object, he proposed to exact a tenth part of every income above a certain sum, by a more direct mode, and by a less fallible criterion, than the assessed taxes. The statement of income was to proceed from the party himself; who, if he were rated at a higher proportion than the actual amount of a tenth part of his income, might appeal to Commissioners to be appointed for the purpose; and these Commissioners were to be empowered to alter the rate on receiving the oath of the party to the fact. In this way, Mr. Pitt hoped that the disclosure of circumstances, from which many might revolt, would be avoided; and, at the same time, every man would be under the necessity of contributing his fair and equal proportion.

Besides the Commissioners, it was proposed to appoint a surveyor, whose business it would be to state to the Commissioners the grounds of any doubts which he might entertain respecting the fairness of the proportion



at which an individual might have rated himself. The Commissioners, if they thought the doubts reasonable, were to call on the party for further explanations. When, in the case of the assessed taxes, so many evasions were known to have taken place; when the consequences, which had resulted from a vague rule of exemption, and an indefinite principle of deduction, were considered; when it had been seen that, by the different modes by which exemptions were regulated, persons, who probably would have shrunk from a direct fraud, had been able, by different pretences, to disguise to themselves the fair and adequate proportion which they ought to have contributed, it became more than ever necessary to render every case of exemption precise, and to guard every title to deduction from the danger of abuse. To prevent the country from suffering by dishonesty, to prevent the willing contributor from being taxed to the utmost extent of his means, while his wealthy neighbour was indebted to his meanness for exemption, it was necessary to guard with greater strictness against every chance of evasion. When doubts were entertained, that a false statement had been given, it was to be competent for these Commissioners to call for a specification of income.



The different proportions of income arising from land, from trade, annuity, or profession, which should give a claim to deduction, should be simplified, and stated with precision.—The Commissioners were then to say, whether they were satisfied with the statement which had been given; the surveyor was to be allowed to examine, and to report, whether there appeared reason to believe that the assessment was adequate. When the day of examination arrived, the Commissioners were to hear what the surveyor, and the party, had to alledge in support of the objection, and of the assessment, and to examine other individuals. The schedule, to be drawn up in such a manner as accurately to define every case of exemption or deduction, was to be presented by the party, with his claim clearly specified. He was to make oath to the truth of this schedule. The party, however, was not to be compelled to answer; his books were not to be called for; nor his confidential clerks, or agents, examined. If, however, he should decline such examination, and other means of ascertaining the truth, the Commissioners were to be empowered to fix the assessment, and their decision was to be final, unless an appeal were made to the higher Commissioners, who were proposed to be appointed by the act. In short, no disclosure was to be



compulsory; but if the party objected to disclose, he must acquiesce in the decision of the Commissioners, who should not be authorized to relieve without a full disclosure.

It was evident, from this statement, that the Commissioners were to be entrusted with powers of an extraordinary nature, such powers as could not fail to excite great jealousy, and such as nothing but the paramount object of the public good could justify the legislature in conferring; neither ought they to have been proposed, unless from a conviction that no other regulation would be sufficient for the purpose to be accomplished.—Mr. Pitt, indeed, seems to have considered his proposal in this light, and to have justified it on this ground. In order to obviate one inconvenience, to be dreaded from the powers to be vested in the Commissioners, he proposed, that they should take an oath not to disclose the information they might receive in their official capacity, nor to avail themselves of it for any other purpose unconnected with the execution of the act.

It is a lamentable consideration, that, in order to secure a due collection of the taxes, which the necessities of the times have, at different periods, compelled the legislature to impose, a multiplication of oaths has been found requisite. This is to be lamented on two grounds;



first, as it has a tendency to multiply the temptations to commit perjury, one of the most heinous crimes of which a Christian can be guilty; and, secondly, as it tends to weaken the moral feelings, the religious awe, with which the sanctity of an oath, of a solemn appeal to the Almighty, for the truth of an assertion, ought ever to be regarded. The ill consequences which flow from this effect of multiplied oaths are manifold, and have an influence, more or less direct, on all the religious, moral, and social, obligations, without which a society of Christians cannot long be holden together. It should, therefore, be with extreme caution, and never without an absolute necessity, that the Legislature should lend their sanction to the administration of a new oath.

To provide, as far as human regulations could provide, against false swearing, Mr. Pitt vested the Commissioners with powers to prosecute any man for perjury, who should have made a false statement upon oath. But, by parity of reasoning, the Commissioners themselves, if they disclosed what they were sworn to conceal, should have been subjected to a similar prosecution.

In estimating the probable amount of the proposed tax, Mr. Pitt had, of course, no cri-



terion to guide him. Much must, of necessity, be left to conjecture.—He had, however, taken care to consult all the authorities, and to examine all the documents, which could throw any light on the subject. With a view to ascertain the amount of property derived from land, he had looked into various productions, in which the question had been treated. The earliest author, however, whom he consulted, was Sir William Petty, who wrote in the middle of the seventeenth century,\* when the rent of land was stated at eight millions. At the latter end of the same, and at the beginning of the following, century, two writers of note, Davenant and King, represented the rent of land to be fourteen millions. Posterior to that time it was a received opinion, that a land-tax of four shillings in the pound was equivalent to about two shillings of what would be collected on the real rents of the kingdom, which

\* It was in 1666 that Sir William Petty published his treatise, entitled, “*Verbum Sapienti*,” in which he gave an account of the riches and expences of the country, and shewed that England was then competent to bear taxes to the amount of four millions per annum. If, then, England could bear such a charge when the rental of land was only eight millions, and when her commerce was comparatively small, what charge can she bear when her landed rental is so greatly augmented, and when her commerce has increased in an infinite degree?



were said to amount to twenty millions. Full twenty years before the present period, this was said, by a writer who was a Member of Parliament, and who, in a work which he published, expressly recommended the very principle which Mr. Pitt now recommended.—Adam Smith, too, in his *Wealth of Nations*, had made the same estimate, and supported the same principle. Mr. Middleton, who, at a subsequent period, was employed by the Board of Agriculture, had rated the cultivated land of the country to amount to little less than forty millions of acres. The average value of this land, Mr. Pitt estimated, for the purpose of his present calculation, at twelve shillings and sixpence per acre, which was assuredly much below its real value. This would produce, then, twenty-five millions a year,—only five millions more than the land was stated to yield twenty years before. From this gross amount Mr. Pitt deducted one-fifth, for allowances to be made to persons whose incomes did not amount to £200 a year, and for those incomes below £60 which were to contribute nothing;—thus leaving twenty millions as the taxable property produced by land.

He next directed his attention to the tax to be paid by the tenant, for the income which he derived from the land. The tenant's portion



he rated at three-fourths of the rack rent paid to the landlord; but that he might be in no danger of rating this property too high, he reduced it to five millions. The amount of tithes he estimated at five millions, but, allowing for deductions, on account of small livings, he meant to sink it to four millions. He then went over various other sources, whence income, subject to taxation, could be derived, and thus recapitulated the whole.

|                                                                                                            |               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                            | £             |
| The land rental, after deducting one-fifth. ....                                                           | 20,000,000    |
| The tenant's rental of land, deducting two-thirds of the rack rent. ....                                   | 6,000,000     |
| The amount of tithes, deducting one-fifth. ....                                                            | 4,000,000     |
| Produce of mines, canal-navigation, &c. deducting one-fifth. ....                                          | 3,000,000     |
| The rental of houses, deducting one-fifth. ....                                                            | 5,000,000     |
| The profits of professions. ....                                                                           | 2,000,000     |
| The produce of the above sources of income, in Scotland, taken at one-eighth of those of England. ....     | 5,000,000     |
| Amount of income of absentees from Ireland. .                                                              | 1,000,000     |
| Amount of income derived from the West-Indies. ....                                                        | 4,000,000     |
| Amount of interest from the public funds, after deducting one-fifth for exemptions and modifications. .... | 12,000,000    |
| Profit from foreign trade. ....                                                                            | 12,000,000    |
| Profit on home trade, skill, and industry. ....                                                            | 28,000,000    |
|                                                                                                            | <hr/>         |
|                                                                                                            | £ 102,000,000 |
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The tenth of this sum, allowing for miscalculations, would produce ten millions, at which Mr. Pitt estimated the amount of his tax. As an idea had been frequently broached, that any tax upon the produce of the funds would be a breach of the faith pledged to the National Creditor, Mr. Pitt took some pains to shew its fallacy.—He observed, that when a general assessment upon income was to take place, no distinction ought to be made as to the sources from which that income might arise. There could be no fair objection taken by the stockholder to the measure;—there could be no question of a breach of good faith, of national stipulation, with the Public Creditor, by thus imposing on him what every other subject of the realm was to incur. The Public Creditor enjoyed his security under the most sacred obligations of the State, and whenever an idea had been started in debate of imposing upon the stockholders, separately and distinctly, any sort of tax, Mr. Pitt had been prepared to reprobate the attempt, as utterly inconsistent with good faith and public engagements. Parliament had all along concurred with him in the feeling that no such tax ought to be levied upon them, and they had uniformly acted upon that feeling, on the principle, that, as the public came forward and lent their money to the



State, in the moment of its necessity, while, at the same time, they bore, in common with every other description of his Majesty's subjects, the taxes on consumption, they were to be secured against any imposts distinctly levelled at them as annuitants of the public; and the Parliament had felt this more particularly from the recollection of the duty which they owed to persons who had embarked so much, and identified themselves so intimately, with the State. Against any direct tax upon the stockholder, then, Mr. Pitt protested; but the matter was materially different, when a tax was to be levied upon the income of every description of persons in the realm; when it was no longer in the power of the stockholder to say—"I could avoid this tax by removing my property from the funds to landed security, or to trade;" every argument against including him in the assessment was withdrawn. The protection afforded to the stockholder was the same as to the landholder, the merchant, and the manufacturer. The duty, therefore, was the same, and every other description of persons in the country would have a right to complain, if, when they were called upon for a sacrifice of that extraordinary nature, so numerous a body of persons were to be exempted from the assessment. Mr. Pitt was confident,



then, that every person who heard him would agree that the principle of the measure was not liable to any imputation of a breach of faith.—It could not be called a resumption of the annuity which had been granted to the Public Creditors, nor, in the most remote degree, an infringement of the original contract with them. They were, in this instance, only to do what every other body of men within the kingdom were to do;—they were to make a sacrifice of a part of their income to the necessities of the State, and they were to do it upon the principle of giving security and permanence to all which they possessed. He dwelt longer on this topic than he would otherwise have done, because he was aware that objections might be lightly and loosely thrown out against this part of his plan. He should say to the stockholder, as one of the public,—“If you expect from the State the protection which is common to us all, you ought also to make the sacrifice which we are called upon to make. It is not peculiar to you, it does not belong to the quality of your income, but it is made general, and is required from all; you could not embark your capital in any other species of security in which it would not be subject to the same charge.” Mr. Pitt professed he did not know what objection the stockholder could make to this appeal.



Having thus stated the sum which he expected to derive from the tax upon income, he reminded the House, that, in the preceding Session, the assessed taxes were the only part of the public resources which was mortgaged for the sum of £8,000,000 borrowed for the public service in 1797. He, therefore, proposed that the sum now intended to be raised, in lieu of the assessed taxes, should, after its appropriation to the supplies of that year, remain as a pledge for the discharge of that sum for which the assessed taxes were a security, and also for the discharge of the loan of the year, beyond what would be paid out of the sinking fund. Taking the assessed taxes at four millions, they would have been mortgaged for two years after peace; and thus the advantage of the measure proposed was, that no greater sums would be raised on any individuals than those which had been hitherto paid, at least by such as had rendered the measure of the Legislature effectual; they would be relieved of a greater, than a proportional, share of their burden, and the time for which they were to bear it would be materially abridged. The scheme suggested would be productive of still farther advantages; it looked anxiously to the alleviation of the burdens of the country, by a great temporary exertion; it looked to the equality of the tax, and the general efficacy



of the measure, conscious that on them depended her success in the great cause in which the nation was engaged.

By this operation the whole sum necessary for the expences of the year 1799, would be collected, except fourteen millions, which remained to be raised by a loan. Of this, however, four millions and a half were discharged by the operation of the sinking fund, consequently nine millions and a half were the whole sum to be added to the national debt.

Mr. Pitt considered it as unnecessary to go into any detail of argument to convince the House of the advantages attending the beneficial mode adopted last Session of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year. The propriety of the measure had been recognized, and felt in a way the most gratifying to the feelings, and to the pride, of every Englishman. The principle had been proved to be the most wise and beneficial, although in the mode of carrying it into practice it had been so shamefully and grossly evaded. The experience which they had had pointed out the propriety of correcting the errors of that plan, and of enforcing and extending the principle. If they had been able, from the benefits of that measure, so disabled and crippled, to do so much, it was obviously their duty to seek



for means of perfecting the plan; and, if regulations and checks could be found to remedy the abuses which had been committed, it was surely wise and proper that they should be made to apply to a more general and extensive scheme than that which had been already tried. It no longer rested upon theory, or upon reasoning; it was recommended by the surest test of experience; and if, by the efficacy of this plan, they had been able to disappoint the hopes of the enemy; to rise above all the attempts which had been made to disturb our domestic tranquillity; to remove the apprehensions of the despondent, and to shew them that all their fears of our inability to continue the contest were vain; to assert the high and proud distinction which we took in the maintainance of genuine government and social order; if they had been able thereby to animate the public spirit of Europe, to revive its dismayed energy, and to give a turn to the political aspect of the world, favourable to the cause of humanity, ought not the House to persevere in a cause which had been so fruitful of good? If they had proved that, at the end of the sixth year of war, unsubdued by all the exertions and sacrifices which had been made, our commerce was flourishing beyond the example of any year, even of peace; if our



revenues were undiminished; if new means of vigour were daily presenting themselves to their grasp; if their efforts had been crowned with perfect success; if the public sentiment were firm and united in the justice and necessity of the cause in which they were embarked; if every motive to exertion continued the same, and every effort which had been made in the cause was a source only of exultation and pride to the heart; if, by the efficacy of these efforts, there was a prospect of accomplishing the great object of all their sacrifices, and all their labours; if despondency were dissipated at home, and confidence created abroad, should not they persevere in a course so fairly calculated to bring them to a happy issue?

Mr. Pitt called upon the House to do justice to themselves.—It was not merely owing to the dazzling events of the campaign that the country was indebted for the proud station in which she now stood. Great and glorious as those achievements had been, which could not fail to be a source of exultation to every British bosom, he should not detract from the high renown of all those persons to whose skill, vigour, and resolution, the country was indebted for the exploits which had astonished and aroused Europe, when he said that it was not altogether owing to them, that she now felt



herself in a situation so proud and consoling. The grand and important changes which had been effected in Europe were not merely to be ascribed to the promptitude, vigilance, ability, and vigour of the naval department, whose merits no man could feel, or could estimate, more highly than he did; nor to the heroism, zeal, patriotism, and devotion of our transcendent commanders;—and he spoke particularly of that great commander (Nelson) whose services filled every bosom with rapturous emotion, and who would never cease to derive from the gratitude of his countrymen the tribute of his worth;—nor was it to the unparalleled perseverance, valour, and wonders performed by our gallant fleets, which had raised the British name to a distinction unknown even to her former annals, that they were to impute all the advantages of their present posture.—No, they must also do justice to the wisdom, energy, and determination, of the Parliament who had furnished the means, and the power, by which all the rest was sustained, and accomplished. Through them all the departments of Government had the means of employing the force, whose achievements had been so brilliant; through the wisdom of Parliament, the resources of the country had been called forth, and its spirit embodied, in a manner unexampled in



its history. By their firmness, magnanimity, and devotion to the cause, not merely of our own individual safety, but to the cause of mankind in general, we had been enabled to stand forth the saviours of the earth.—No difficulties had stood in our way; no sacrifices had been thought too great for us to make; a common feeling of danger had produced a common spirit of exertion, and the people had cheerfully come forward with a surrender of a part of their property as a salvage, not merely for recovering themselves, but for the general recovery of mankind.—We had presented a phenomenon in the character of nations.

It had often been thought, Mr. Pitt observed, and had been the theme on which historians had expatiated, that as nations became mercantile, they lost in martial spirit what they gained in commercial avidity; that it was of the essence of trade to be sordid, and that high notions of honour were incompatible with the prosecution of traffic. Without entering into any examination of the reasons on which this hypothesis was founded, he contented himself with the remark, that its injustice had been proved in England; for, in the memorable æra of the last year, Great Britain had exhibited the glorious example of a nation shewing the most universal spirit of military heroism, at a time when she had acquired the most flourish-



ing degree of national commerce. In no time of the proudest antiquity could the people of this country display a more dignified character of martial spirit, than they had displayed during that year, when they had risen to the greatest point of commercial advantage.—“And,” said Mr. Pitt, “they are not insensible of the benefits, as well as of the glory, they have acquired; they know and feel that the most manly course has also been the most prudent, and they are sensible that, by braving the torrent with which they were threatened, instead of striking balances on their fate, and looking to the average of profit and loss, on standing out, or on yielding, to the tempest, they have given to themselves not merely security, but lustre and fame. If they had, on the contrary, submitted to purchase a suspension of danger, and a mere pause of war, they feel that they could only have purchased the means of future, and more deplorable, mischief, marked with the stamp of impoverishment and degradation; they feel, therefore, that, in pursuing the path which duty and honour prescribed, they have also trod the path of prudence and economy. They have secured to themselves permanent peace, and future repose, and have given an animating example to the world of the advantages of vigour, constancy, and union.”



Mr. Pitt entered into a train of argument calculated to prove, that the new system of finance, now proposed for adoption, even considered, exclusively, in an economical point of view, was the best that could be pursued. He contended that, in any war of the duration of six years, the old plan of funding all the sums raised for its support, would leave, at its close, a greater *permanent* burden upon the nation than would be incurred, for six years only of its continuance, and one year beyond it, provided the sacrifice of a tenth of every income was made. In the old, unwise, and destructive, way of raising the supplies by a permanent fund, without any provision for its redemption, a war entailed the burden upon the age, and upon posterity for ever. This evil had, to be sure, in a great measure, been removed, or corrected, by the salutary and valuable system of the redemption fund, lately adopted.—But that fund could not, of itself, accomplish the end in a shorter period than forty years; and, during all that time, the expences of a war, so funded, must press hard upon the people.—If, on the contrary, it had, at an early period of our history, been resolved to adopt the present mode of raising the supplies within the year; if, for instance, after the peace of Aix la Chapelle, the scheme of redemption even had been adopted, and per-



severed in to the present time, there would not have been more to raise, in 1798, for the seventh year of the war, than what was then paid of permanent taxes, with about one-fourth of the additional imposts now proposed to be levied. By the adoption of this plan, at length, the foundation was laid of a system which would make the country independent of all the future events of the world.

This system had, for its principle, the permanency of British grandeur, and the independence and happiness of a generation unborn. "You will feel," said Mr. Pitt, in conclusion, "that it is not only to the splendour of your arms, to the achievements of your fleets, that you are indebted for the high distinction which you, at present, enjoy; but also to the wisdom of the Councils you have adopted, in taking advantage of the influence which your happy Constitution confers beyond the example of any other people, and by which you have given a grand and edifying lesson to dismayed Europe,—that safety, honour, and repose, must ever depend upon the energy with which danger is met, and resisted. You have shewn the power of self-defence, which is permanent and unassailable. Standing upon the principles which you have assumed, the wild and extravagant hopes of the enemy will be thwarted; Europe will be aroused, and animated, to adopt a course



so honourable; and surely, with the means of perseverance thus obvious, you will not think it prudent, or necessary, to shrink from your principles, or to take shelter in a peace which might be obtained by a more temporising conduct, but which would neither be safe nor durable.— But, Sir, I cannot encourage any sentiment so degrading; I feel, in common, with every Gentleman who hears me, the proud situation in which we have been placed, and the importance which it has given us in the scale of nations. The rank that we now hold, I trust, we shall continue to cherish, and that, in pursuing the same glorious course, we shall all of us feel it to be a source of pride and consolation, that we are the subjects of the King of Great Britain.” He then moved the following resolutions:—

“ RESOLVED,

“ That it is the opinion of this Committee, that so much of an act made in the last Session of Parliament, intituled, ‘ An Act for granting to his Majesty an aid and contribution for the prosecution of the war,’ as charges any person with an additional duty in proportion to the amount of the rates or duties to which, prior to the fifth day of April, 1798, such person was assessed, according to any assessment made in pursuance of any Act of Parliament



in force at the time of passing the said Act of the last session, be repealed.

“ RESOLVED,

“ That it is the opinion of this Committee, that, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, there be charged, annually, during a term to be limited, the several rates and duties following, upon all income arising upon property in Great Britain, belonging to any of his Majesty's subjects, although not resident in Great Britain; and upon all income of every person residing in Great Britain; and of every body, politic or corporate, or company, fraternity, or society, of persons, whether corporate or not corporate, in Great Britain, whether any such income shall arise from lands, tenements, or hereditaments, wheresoever the same shall be situated in Great Britain, or elsewhere; or from any kind of personal property, or other property whatever; or from any profession, office, employment, trade, or vocation; that is to say,—

“ One one hundred and twentieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 60*l.* per annum, and shall be under 65*l.* per annum.

“ One ninety-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 65*l.* but shall be under 70*l.*



“ One seventieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 70%. but shall be under 75%.

“ One sixty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 75%. but shall be under 80%.

“ One sixtieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 80%. but shall be under 85%.

“ One fifty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 85%. but shall be under 90%.

“ One fiftieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 90%. but shall be under 95%.

“ One forty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 95%. but shall be under 100%.

“ One fortieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 100%. but shall be under 105%.

“ One thirty-eighth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 105%. but shall be under 110%.

“ One thirty-sixth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 110%. but shall be under 115%.

“ One thirty-fourth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 115%. but shall be under 120%.



“ One thirty-second part of such income, if the same shall amount to 120*l*. but shall be under 125*l*.

“ One thirtieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 125*l*. but shall be under 130*l*.

“ One twenty-eighth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 130*l*. but shall be under 135*l*.

“ One twenty-sixth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 135*l*. but shall be under 140*l*.

“ One twenty-fourth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 140*l*. but shall be under 145*l*.

“ One twenty-second part of such income, if the same shall amount to 145*l*. but shall be under 150*l*.

“ One twentieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 150*l*. but shall be under 155*l*.

“ One nineteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 155*l*. but shall be under 160*l*.

“ One eighteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 160*l*. but shall be under 165*l*.

“ One seventeenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 165*l*. but shall be under 170*l*.



“ One sixteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 170*l*. but shall be under 175*l*.

“ One fifteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 175*l*. but shall be under 180*l*.

“ One fourteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 180*l*. but shall be under 185*l*.

“ One thirteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 185*l*. but shall be under 190*l*.

“ One twelfth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 190*l*. but shall be under 195*l*.

“ One eleventh part of such income, if the same shall amount to 195*l*. but shall be under 200*l*.

“ And One tenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 200*l*. or upwards.”

Some few objections were made to the proposed tax by Mr. Tierney, who insisted that while it professed to fall equally on all descriptions of property, it would be very little felt by the *monied interest*; and that it would affect a material change in society, by compelling persons of small property to sell what they possessed. The resolutions, however, were passed without a division.



It might reasonably have been objected to the plan, that it made its *maximum* of contribution begin at too low a rate of income; and that, on that account, it lost much of its character of *Equality*. For instance, to take twenty pounds a year from a man who had only two hundred, might compel him to give up housekeeping, and to alter his whole style of living. At all events, it would deprive him not of luxuries (for such he could not have the means of enjoying,) but of many of the comforts, if not of the *necessaries*, of life. Whereas the deduction of two thousand pounds from an income of twenty thousand, would produce no such alteration; it would only reduce some few articles of luxury, or curtail the means of accumulation. If, however, the exigencies of the State rendered this sacrifice necessary in persons of slender income, the tax should have been so contrived as to make men of large income feel *the* inconvenience, and the pressure, in at least an equal degree, which could not be done, by only subjecting them to the sacrifice of an equal portion of income. In order to achieve *this* desirable purpose, it would have been necessary to increase the scale of contribution in incomes above a certain sum. It is probable, however, that Mr. Pitt was aware that such a proposal would prove destructive of his whole



plan, by the opposition which it would excite; and he was too good a practical politician to sacrifice a great public advantage, by a doubtful attempt to obtain one still greater.

The debate on the subject was renewed on the tenth of December, when the Report was brought up. The Bill was then opposed by Sir John Sinclair, Mr. William Smith, and others. The Baronet was of opinion, that only five per cent. should be levied on *income*, and one-half per cent. on *capital*. He objected to the measure on three grounds:—First, as it would promote emigration;—Secondly, as it would diminish the produce of the old taxes;—and, Thirdly, as it would raise the price of all the necessaries of life. He observed that, formerly, our principal taxes, arising from consumption, and not extending to many of the real comforts and necessaries of life, were, in a manner, voluntary. The exchequer was enriched; the people were happy; and the profusion of government was happily checked by the conviction, that, if the taxes were carried beyond a certain point, the produce, instead of increasing, would be diminished. But if this Bill passed, he contended, the whole property of the country would, in future, lie at the mercy of the Minister.—For, though he now, very moderately, required only a tenth part of



their income, he established a principle, that the government of the country was entitled to demand a certain portion of the income of each individual, and was also entitled to enforce that compulsive requisition by the strictest and harshest regulations.

The Bill was opposed by Sir Francis Baring, on the ground of its greater liability to evasions than the assessed taxes; and our commerce, he said, would be exposed to frauds without end. Such an insinuation from a commercial man, who must be supposed to have been master of the subject, in that respect, was entitled to serious consideration.—But he was no better a logician than a prophet, when he stated his dislike of the measure as a sufficient reason for predicting its failure.

Sir John Sinclair here substituted the *Minister* for the *Legislature*, and praised a mode of taxation for the very reason which proved its inadequacy to the purpose for which alone any taxes are justifiable—the good of the State; or, in other words, the welfare of the Community.—Assuredly the *Minister* could have no right or title to demand one sixpence from the people; but it is evident, that unless the Legislature had a right to demand whatever was necessary for defending the honour and security of the country against the attacks of



its enemies, the State could not preserve its independence, nor yet its political existence; but must fall an easy victim to the first formidable neighbour, who had the art to plan, and the resolution to pursue, its ruin. And, if it were true, that a tax on articles of consumption could never be carried beyond a certain point, it would be a sufficient proof of the propriety of having recourse to a different mode of taxation, whenever the state of the country should render it necessary for self-defence, to go beyond that point of expenditure. If Ministers are profuse of the public money, or carry on a war on slight or frivolous pretexts, or without a strong and adequate motive, it is not in the unproductiveness of a tax, but in the integrity of a Parliament, that the Constitution has provided an efficient check, and an insurmountable obstacle. A war cannot be carried on without the sanction of Parliament, nor can it be persisted in, without its approbation.

Mr. William Smith approved the principle of the Bill, so far as it went to raise a certain portion of the supplies within the year. But he preferred the regulation of the preceding year to the present measure, because the former made it optional with the contributor, whether he would contribute much or little; whereas the latter rendered the contribution compulsory, and



afforded no power of evading it by a diminution of expenditure. He declared his opinion, that the Bill was unconstitutional, unjust, oppressive, cruel, and fraudulent.

In answer to these various objections, Mr. Pitt observed, that he was relieved from the necessity of employing many arguments, as there was but one Member in the House, alluding to Sir John Sinclair, who was disposed to contest the *principle* of the Bill. Whatever authority might belong to that solitary antagonist, and no man had more, he seemed entirely to rest upon it, as he had not added a single argument in support of his position. There were others, however, who, although they concurred in the principle, and must be aware, that a measure of such magnitude and importance must depend much upon the arrangement of details, and the regulation of provisions, evinced a resolution to check all attempts to bring those points again into consideration. Confessing the necessity of great and vigorous efforts for the salvation of the country, in which some of them, now, for the first time, had tardily discovered that our safety was involved, they did not wait to reject the measure upon any ground of final and invincible objection, but they came forward to resist it in the very outset, previous to a mature examina-



tion of its details, and to a sincere endeavour to correct its provisions.

Alluding to Mr. W. Smith's remarks, who had approved the principle of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year; but had declared himself an enemy to any plan for rendering that principle effectual by a general tax, Mr. Pitt did not doubt but that the House would regard this as a most valuable concession! If it were necessary for the effort which they were called upon to make, if it were essential to the firm establishment of public credit, and to the future prosperity of the empire, to obtain that supply which was necessary for the vigorous prosecution of the contest, it was evident that it must be obtained by a tax immediately productive. If it were impossible, by an increase on the existing taxes on consumption, by the introduction of evils ten times more severe than those which were imputed to this measure, it was clear that nothing could realize the principle but some extraordinary and general tax. If Mr. Smith admitted, as he presumed he did, that such an increase of the taxes on consumption as would produce ten millions within the year was impracticable, it followed that there was no other mode but a tax upon property, so far as it could be discovered. The contribution, then, must be laid



either upon capital or upon income. From this general operation, however, Mr. Smith would exempt all those whom he was pleased to call, exclusively, the *useful* classes. In the class of useless, he had thought proper to rank all the proprietors of land, those men who form the line which binds and knits society together,—those on whom, in a great measure, the administration of justice, and the internal police of the country, depend;—those men from whom the poor receive employment, from whom agriculture derives its improvement and support, and to whom, of course, commerce itself is indebted for the foundation on which it rests. Yet this class had he chosen to stigmatize as useless drones, of no estimation, or merit, in the eyes of society. When the consequences with which this light, flippant theory, the offspring of mere temporary unthinking policy, would be attended were fairly considered, Mr. Smith would find that his distinction between useful and useless classes was as little founded in truth, as the practical system which he had built on it would be consistent with the general interest of those whom he thought entitled to peculiar favour. The question, then, was, whether capital or income was the proper object of contribution? Mr. Smith had said, that capital was the criterion which ought to be adopted



in the case of the commercial man, (he was himself, be it observed, a commercial man,) and income, when it was derived from land. Taking for granted, that his principles were well founded, no less than three-fourths of the whole income liable to contribution was calculated to arise from that source. Even upon his own argument, then, he should not consider the measure as so incurable as to be utterly incapable of correction in a Committee. If he were sincere in his profession of a desire to facilitate the raising of a considerable part of the supplies within the year, why should he refuse to proceed further in a measure, which was, at least, capable of embracing three-fourths of his own avowed object; and which was, in other parts, susceptible of alteration and improvement? If, however, what had been so universally recognized as important to be done was to be done effectually; and the great consideration was, on which of these leading objects it would be most advantageous to the public, and least inconvenient to the contributors, to impose this general and comprehensive tax, Mr. Pitt was afraid, that to the very plan which Mr. Smith thought preferable, those objections on which he rested his desponding hope, that the country neither could, nor would, submit to the measure, would apply



with aggravated force. Every objection, which he had so long, and so vehemently, urged against the danger of disclosure, would attach to those new theories of policy on which he would act. He was against disclosure. How, then, was he to ascertain the amount of that commercial capital, the profits of which he thought might justly be made to contribute? Would he be contented with that loose declaration, which experience had proved to be so favourable to evasion? Would he recognize the justice of a principle which he would utterly defeat and nullify, by the provisions he recommended to carry it into effect? What, then, did he do to support that great cause, to invigorate those extraordinary efforts which were necessary for our success in a contest, which all but a few, who had very lately got some new lights, had long considered to be connected with our existence? When appearing, for the first time, as a proselyte to the cause of his country, and of mankind, though standing in the new character of a convert, he still retained so much of the bias of his old opinions, that he denied the means of rendering those measures effective, which he acknowledged to be indispensable, and of carrying into practice that principle which he professed to approve.



Mr. Smith having launched into a general strain of invective against persons employed to collect the revenue in general, and against the surveyors proposed to be appointed under this act in particular, Mr. Pitt deemed it worthy of some pointed comments. The subject, he thought, appeared to be taken up merely as it afforded an opportunity of embellishing his discourse with the violent invectives, and offensive epithets, by which it was distinguished. He would not repeat the odious description which had been applied to the persons who were to act in the capacity of surveyor under the Bill. What, Mr. Pitt asked, was the purpose, what the tendency, of such invective? What could be the effect of such reproachful language, so indiscriminately applied; but to bring into discredit those officers of the revenue, without whom it could not be collected, and without whom public business must be at a stand? Mr. Smith had said, that the surveyor was at liberty to surcharge to any amount, and that, pending the appeal to which such surcharge would give rise, the tax would continue to be levied on the whole of the demand, including the surcharge. What was the remedy which he discovered for this evil? He had said, in allusion to a remark of Sir Francis Baring's, that the discussion of the



repeal might be rendered so intricate as to last for six or even for twelve months. This objection he had urged triumphantly, at the very time, too, when he stated it to be the mode which the person surcharged would adopt for his relief, at the very moment when he was compelled to acquiesce in the payment of a surcharge, from which he took care that it should be impossible for the Commissioners of appeal to relieve him! It happened, however, that the grievance which had been pressed so strongly was only an imaginary grievance, for it was not to be found in the Bill, and, in fact, could not exist. The surveyor's charge was not to be acted upon, in the first instance, unless it was confirmed by the Commissioners. The surveyor was to have no discretion whatever to add to the charge made on the contributor. He was not to be a person on whose discretion any assessment was to depend;—he was to *assist* the Commissioners with *information*, and to discharge that duty which his oath prescribed, of preventing evasion, where it might be within his knowledge that it was attempted. It had been said, in proof of the importance of the surveyor's office, that they had great influence with the Commissioners in other matters, where the revenue was concerned; but, when the characters of the Commissioners



were considered, the remark would prove, that, instead of that profligate, worthless, class, which Mr. Smith had described, they were men who recommended themselves by the propriety of their conduct, and the performance of their duty.—But the surveyor was the only man whom the House were to regard as likely to be bound by his oath. In answer to this remark, it was asked, was there no distinction between the cases?—Was the temptation to perjury the same?—Had the man, who was sworn to the performance of his duty, the same reason to disregard his oath, as the man had who was endeavouring to avoid the payment of money to the State?—What, then, was required? A *particular* statement of income, to guard against the evasion which was practised when a *general* statement was only required. What was this but the means of correcting those frauds which every man's observation but Mr. Smith's had ascertained to be prevalent? That Gentleman, too, had ascribed another power to the surveyor which he did not possess; that of making extracts from the books of public bodies.—He had no such power; he was to have access to, and to make extracts from, those public books, to which, at present, any person might easily procure access for any purpose, even of mere curiosity.



Any body might ascertain how much any mercantile house possessed in the three per cents. The surveyor, then, was authorized to suggest doubts, and to collect information ; but he had no right whatever to ask questions of the party surcharged, or to have any inspection of his books.

On the objection which had been urged, that the application of the tax would be unequal in respect to the nature, proportion, and duration of income, Mr. Pitt expressed an anxiety to remove the erroneous conceptions which had been formed. The arguments of Mr. Smith supposed the necessity of correcting the inequality which distinguished the mode in which all taxes were imposed. If such were his sentiments, his objection went a great deal farther than the Bill then before the House. The inequalities of which he complained arose out of the nature of society ; the distribution of its rank, and the classification of its property. If he attempted to remedy what he considered as a defect in these points, he would attempt something which had never yet been done by any system of taxation, something which sprang from theories of legislation, neither founded in wisdom, nor justified by experience. Mr. Smith said, that if two persons had each £500 a year, one of which derived his income from land, the other from industry, they ought not to be both taxed



equally at £50. He assumed that, each having £450 a year left, the income was unequal. What did the new tax propose to do?—Would it not leave them, in relation to each other, precisely as they were before? The tax created no new inequality.—The justice, or the injustice, remained precisely as it was. To complain of this inequality was to complain of the distribution of property, was to complain of the constitution of society. To attempt to remedy it, would be to follow the example of that daring rabble of legislators in another country, from whom Mr. Smith borrowed some of his political principles, and which, though he now reprobated them, he still seemed inclined to follow up. To think of taxing these two species of income, in a different ratio, would be to attempt what the nature of society would not admit, what had never been practised in the course of four thousand years.—But on what foundation did the principle, which he had broached, rest? Where was the clear inequality on which he so vehemently insisted? Was the industry of the artist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, less the creature of the protection of law, less involved in the great contest in which we were engaged, less likely to be overthrown in any disasters of the State, than the income which arose from land? If all classes in the country were not strictly



equal sharers in the advantages which the Constitution afforded, there were none who ought not to contribute in proportion to their means for the public defence, in a quarrel in which the comforts, and the happiness, of all were deeply involved, unless when the compassion of the Legislature forbore to extend the scale of taxation to the lowest class of income.

In imputing to Mr. Smith that extravagant principle which struck at the whole distribution of property in society, Mr. Pitt conceived himself fully justified by the arguments which Mr. Smith had employed. Indeed he had been particularly careful to repeat his monstrous propositions over and over again, in proportion as he saw that they were disgusting to the feelings of the House. That industry ought to be encouraged and promoted, was a sentiment which no body would dispute, a truth which nobody could deny. It should be remembered, however, that this, among many others, was a case in which virtue was its own reward.—What, then, was the true state of the argument? An income of £500 from land might be equal to about £15,000 in money, so that a man was contented to take three per cent. for his capital. In the funds, according to circumstances, a man might have five, or even six per cent. If he laid out his capital in trade,



and added it to his own industry, he would get from 10 to 15 per cent. Now, if the proposition were left undisturbed, what would form the encouragement to lay out money in trade and manufactures, but the improved produce derived from industry? This was the incentive which inflamed enterprize, and stimulated ingenuity. Allow that order, under which commerce and arts had risen to such an unexampled height of prosperity in this country, to remain undisturbed, and that incentive, that encouragement, and that reward, on which industry depended, would be preserved. Mr. Pitt much doubted whether any table which Mr. Smith could form from all the new political lights which he had ever received, could lay a foundation more secure, or more permanent, for arts, commerce, and every kind of exertion, than that on which they had grown so great, and flourished so long.

Another argument against the measure, which had been employed, both in the House, and in the public prints of the day, was noticed by Mr. Pitt. It had been asserted that the proposed tax was a *tithe*, and that all tithes were equally unfavourable to industry. This argument, whether valid or not, did not, he contended, apply to the present case. The tenth, imposed by the bill, was a tenth of the clear



profits, after the expences of labour had been deducted. The more he had thought upon this particular subject, and upon taxation in general, the more he was convinced not only of the futility, but of the danger, of any attempt, by the distribution of imposts, to make any difference in that order, which the nature of society had already established. To proceed beyond the arrangement already formed, and beyond the provisions made for accommodating the proportion of taxes to the classes of property already marked, would be to dissolve all established principles, and to overthrow the fabric of society, which time and the progress of accumulation had reared.

Another curious inference was, Mr. Pitt observed, to be drawn from the observations which had been made upon the hardships incurred by persons possessed of life estates, of temporary incomes, and by those who received the rewards of laborious employments. It happened, singularly enough, that the public offices held under government, uniting in their nature, profits derived from labour and temporary estates, were included in the operation of the bill. Now the very man who resisted the measure on this ground, among others, had proposed, on former occasions, as a great resource for the national expenditure, that all those offices



should be made to contribute largely to the public service. But the calculations furnished that night were not more exact than those which Sir John Sinclair had advanced, on the former occasion. The references, certainly, were not those of the board of agriculture; but Sir John had made the prodigious discovery, that, if all the public offices were placed on a reduced establishment, and others suppressed, the sum of ten millions might be saved to the public. Mr. Pitt was highly pleased with this project, and sincerely wished for the execution of it; but he was always unfortunately stopped in every attempt he made to go on with it, by finding that the entire expences of the public offices amounted only to one-tenth of the prodigious saving which had been so confidently held out. The baronet's attention had been engrossed by agricultural studies, and military tactics, or he might have known, that a Committee, appointed for the express purpose, had made a very different calculation.

In answer to a more specious, and, indeed, more solid, objection,—that it was unjust that the man who had an annuity or an income, the fruit of his labour, should pay in the same proportion as another who derived the same revenue from fixed property, Mr. Pitt said that the objection was altogether a fallacy. A permanent



income, which was represented as never dying and, as it were, the property of a man after his death, contributed on every exigency which might occur; the income from labour and industry was extinguished, it contributed but once; it was no longer the property of the same person; while the other, which was considered as the same property, was subject to renewed demands. This reasoning might be thought refined; but the answer, in his opinion, was fairly applicable to the case where the reason, why fixed property should contribute more, was founded on its supposed permanency, in opposition to the fleeting character of the other. How then was it possible to discriminate between the various kinds of property, or to enter into the details which could alone enable the House to apply any scale of exemption, without an investigation more oppressive, a disclosure more extensive, than any thing which the Bill would permit? How much safer was it to submit to these inequalities, which were the lot of man, and which it was not the business, nor was it in the power, of schemes of finance to correct! Could they even indulge a wish to correct those inequalities, which arose out of the very nature of society, was the remedy proposed the proper remedy for the legislature to adopt? They had better forbear to attempt what was perhaps



beyond the power of human legislation to correct. It was an enterprize that would hurry them far beyond their depth, and lead to consequences far more extensive than they could foresee, and might produce an overthrow of all establishments, and of all regular order, which could not be contemplated without apprehension. The principle of argument that went to remedy this supposed evil, belonged to the school of dangerous innovation, which ought not for a moment to be indulged. Mr. Pitt, having thus replied to all the objections pressed against his plan, concluded with a brief statement of its effects. Its consequence would be, that whoever contributed a tenth of his income under the bill would have a tenth less to spend, to save, or to accumulate. At the end of the war such contributors would be no poorer; they would only be to the extent of the tax, less increased in wealth than they would have been. The advantages of it were in a particular manner favourable to those on whom it would fall, as, instead of accumulating taxes on consumption, it would bring all income to contribute equally, and include a great deal of that which, in the hands of persons who spent less than their income, escaped contribution altogether. Laying aside the proud idea of the vigour, permanence, and renovated energy, which the measure secured,



there was one case which, with a view to that class who were really willing to save for the benefit of those for whom they were bound to provide, required some modification. This was in favour of persons who had recourse to that easy, certain, and advantageous mode of providing for their families by ensuring their lives. The Bill allowed a deduction for what was paid on such account.

“Such,” said Mr. Pitt, “is the general view of the merits of this important question. It is one which has engaged much of my serious attention, and I am far from presuming that it has already attained the perfection of which it is capable. The inequalities objected to it are not peculiar to its nature; they arise from our social state itself, and the correction of that order, we cannot, as we ought not to, attempt to alter. It would be a presumptuous attempt to derange the order of society, which would terminate in producing confusion, havock, and destruction, and with a derangement of property, and in the overthrow of civilized life.”

[1799.] The motion for the farther consideration of this important measure was carried by one hundred and eighty-three votes against *seventeen*. The Bill underwent some farther discussion, at different periods, but experienced very little more opposition in its progress



through the House of Commons. In the Lords it was strongly opposed by Lords Suffolk and Holland, and by the Duke of Bedford ; and was supported, principally, by Lords Auckland, and Grenville, and the Chancellor. It having been asked, in the course of this debate, whether, if his Majesty's ministers could have foreseen the calamities which had resulted from the war, and the extension of territory which the French had gained by it, they would ever have embarked in it? Lord Grenville distinctly declared, for himself, that, had he been perfectly assured beforehand, that all these events would take place, the subjugation and pillage of Italy, the conquest of Holland, the massacres in Switzerland, or even the murder of the King of France ; these things, aye, and ten times more, he would have sacrificed, to stem the tide of those vicious and false principles, fantastically called philosophy, but in truth nothing more than the effusions of revolutionary madness.\* Lord Holland, on the other hand, declared, that, had he been a Frenchman, it would have been the pride of his life to have been concerned in bringing about the Revolution ; though he denied that, in such case, it would have been just to make him responsible for the atrocities which it produced.

\* Annual Register for 1799, p. 280.



As to Lord Grenville's assertion, his Lordship could only mean to say, that if by the war we had preserved our own country from all the horrors of a revolution, produced by the diffusion of jacobinical principles, he would have purchased such a mighty advantage even at the expence of all the disastrous and serious consequences which had ensued from the war. But it might have been asked, if the war had not taken place, would these disasters not have been sustained? Would not the unhappy King of France have fallen a prey to the wickedness of his rebellious subjects? Would not the limits of the republic have been extended to the Rhine and to the Alps? Would not Savoy have been subdued, Switzerland subjugated, and Italy enslaved? Nothing but profound ignorance of the views and designs of the founders of the French Republic, the original promoters of the Revolution, as they are to be collected from their own recorded sentiments, could lead any one to answer these questions in the negative. In fact, it was early resolved to achieve all these monstrous plans of aggrandizement and conquest in war or in peace; and it was also determined to provoke a war, at least with the continental powers, for the purpose of acquiring a greater facility, and some flimsy pretext, for carrying them into execution. The



notion promulgated by Lord Holland, that a man who had contributed to produce the revolution, was not responsible for its consequences, could not stand the test of examination.—For if a man persisted, in spite of remonstrance or reproof, in subverting all the existing establishments of a country, in the delusive hope of meliorating the condition of the people, when told, too, that the most calamitous consequences would result from the adoption of his proposed innovations, to allow him to take refuge from the badness of his actions, in the goodness of his intentions, would be a species of political morality, the soundness of which might fairly and *justly*, be disputed.

The Duke of Bedford took occasion to advance a strange proposition, that all persons concurred in the expediency of abolishing tithes, if a proper substitute could be found. This the Chancellor most peremptorily denied. There was, perhaps, no one question, he truly observed, on which such a variety of opinions prevailed, nor were tithes confined to the Clergy ; they were held by many of the laity, and held by as good a title as that by which the Freeholder held his estate. And certainly the clergy held their tithes by as good a tenure as that by which the estates of the House of Russel were held. The Bill passed by a decisive majority, and became a law early in April.



The financial arrangements of the year, however, were not completed till the beginning of June, when Mr. Pitt brought forward his account of expences and resources, drawn up with more accuracy than that which he had presented in December; it now stood thus:

|                                                                      |             |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Navy.....                                                            | £13,653,000 |              |
| Deduct diminution of<br>Navy debt, and money<br>expended, in 1799 .. | 1,403,000   |              |
|                                                                      | <hr/>       | £12,250,000  |
| Army.....                                                            |             | 8,840,000    |
| Votes of credit, 1798.....                                           |             | 1,000,000    |
| Extraordinaries, 1799.....                                           |             | 2,500,000    |
| Ordnance, exclusive of sea service ....                              |             | 1,570,000    |
| Miscellaneous services .....                                         |             | 3,264,351    |
| Deficiency in land and malt.....                                     |             | 498,000      |
| Subsidy to Russia .....                                              |             | 825,000      |
| National debt.....                                                   |             | 200,000      |
|                                                                      |             | <hr/>        |
|                                                                      |             | £ 30,947,000 |
|                                                                      |             | <hr/>        |
| Vote of credit for 1799.....                                         |             | 3,000,000    |
|                                                                      |             | <hr/>        |

To meet this increased demand, a farther supply of £315,000 was necessary. And this Mr. Pitt proposed to raise, by an additional duty of four shillings per cwt. on clayed sugars from the British plantations, which, reckoning the consumption at 200,000 cwt,



would produce £40,000;—by withholding a certain proportion of the drawback allowed on sugar exported, £62,000;—by observing the same rule with foreign sugars exported, £14,000;—by a diminution of the bounty on refined sugars, £39,000;—by eightpence per cwt. on British sugars for home consumption, £56,000;—by a reduction of the bounty on coffee exported, £65,000;—and by a duty of twopence on all notes under forty shillings, £42,000: making a total of £318,000.

Mr. Pitt, having enlarged on the advantages proved to have already resulted from the adoption of the plan of raising a great part of the supplies within the year, took a brief view of the improvements which had taken place in the system of finance. In all the wars, previous to the present, from the time of the Revolution, the mode of raising money had been that of borrowing, and leaving to posterity the burden of paying principal and interest. The successful institution of the sinking fund had made a material alteration in this system. Its consequence would be, that, whatever might be the expence of any war, each year would carry along with it the extinction of a certain portion of the debt that might be contracted; and, in case of the continuance of some years of peace, the whole of the



national debt would, after the expiration of a certain time, be liquidated by the accumulating operation of that fund; so that our debt might rather be considered as an annuity for a limited number of years. In addition to the advantages to be derived from this source, the plan of raising the supplies within the year, whether considered as the means of speedily terminating the contest, or as a certain mode of enabling us to persevere in it successfully for any length of time, would tend to relieve us from all the lasting burdens which a great accumulation of debt would throw upon the country at a future period. Mr. Pitt asserted that we had ample means for supporting not only the existing burdens, but any greater burdens which the necessities of the time might compel us to incur. Supposing the consolidated fund to proceed as it had done for some years past, and that there should be no extraordinary rise in the price of stocks, it would, in the year 1808, arrive at its maximum. The intervening period would be one of great stress upon the country; but it would not be difficult to provide taxes during that time. If the House looked to the certainty of not being baffled in that on which the enemy founded their most sanguine hopes, and placed their chief reliance, while they meditated our destruction, they would



have the satisfaction of seeing that those resources, which that enemy had been obliged to procure through the medium of robbery, confiscation, and murder, were furnished to us by honest industry, and by the free conduct of a generous and loyal people; and that in such abundance, as was sufficient to gratify every view of ambition which we might entertain. Mr. Pitt then entered into a long detail of calculations in order to shew, that the whole of the national debt might be extinguished in the term of thirty-three years of peace; that, supposing the war to be carried on for any length of time, it might be supported without the creation of any new debt; and that in case the war should soon end, and that an interval of ten years should occur between the conclusion of one war and the commencement of another; in that period of peace the sinking fund would discharge seventy millions of debt, and enable the country to enter into another war with superior energy, and increased means.

Previous to this financial discussion, on the same day, (the seventh of June) a motion had been made by Mr. Pitt for a grant to the King of £825,000 to enable his Majesty to make good his engagements with the Emperor of Russia. The motion was opposed by Mr. Tierney, who professed not to understand what



was meant by the *deliverance of Europe*, for which the Russian Emperor had been stated to have taken up arms; and declared that he would not vote any sums for a purpose which he did not comprehend. This "curious doubt," as it was significantly termed, Mr. Pitt undertook to remove. But as the expression must be sufficiently intelligible to all but Parliamentary sceptics, but persons whose powers of comprehension have been destroyed by party-spirit, it is needless to repeat the arguments which Mr. Pitt employed on this occasion.—He did not, however, succeed in removing the film which obscured the mental sight of his antagonist, who contended that the explanation given made it clear that it was not merely against the power of France that we were struggling, but against her system; not merely to repel her within her ancient limits, but to drive her back from her present to her ancient opinions;—in fact, to prosecute the war until the existing government of France should be overthrown. This strange interpretation of his speech, this gross perversion of his sentiments, Mr. Pitt deemed it necessary to disavow. In correcting the misrepresentations of Mr. Tierney, Mr. Pitt observed, that, in the civilized and regular community, States found their mutual security against wrong not in territory only, they had the guarantee of fleets, of armies, of acknow-



ledged integrity, and of tried good faith;— it was to be judged of by the character, the talents, and the virtues, of the men who guided the Councils of Nations, who were the advisers of Princes. But what was there in the situation of the French Republic on which could be founded a confidence which was to be in itself some proof that she could afford security against wrong? She had territory, she had the remains of a navy, she had armies; but what was her character as a moral being? Who was there to bear witness to her integrity? The Swiss Nation? Who bore testimony to her good faith? The States she had plundered, under the delusive, but captivating masks of deliverers from tyranny! What was the character of her advisers? What the aspect of her councils? They were the authors of all that misery, the fountain-head of all those calamities, which, marching by the side of an unblushing despotism, had saddened and obscured the fairest and the gayest portions of Europe; which had deformed the face of nature wherever their pestiferous genius had acquired an ascendancy. In fine, we were to look for security from a government which was constantly making professions of different kinds of sentiments, and which was constantly seceding from every thing which it professed;



a government which had avowed, and which, in its general conduct, still manifested, enmity to every Institution and State in Europe, and particularly to this country, the best regulated in its government, the happiest in itself, of all the Empires which formed that great community.

Mr. Pitt, having explained the grounds on which he thought no secure peace could, at present, be made with France, proceeded briefly to notice "a continued confusion" in Mr. Tierney's ideas. At first, he could not understand what was meant by the deliverance of Europe; and in the second effort of his inquisitive mind he was not more happy.—He had said he could not see any thing in the present principles of France, but mere abstract metaphysical dogmas. What were those principles which guided the arms of France, in their unprincipled attack on the independence of Switzerland, which had extorted his reprobation? Was the degradation, without trial, of the Members of the French Assemblies;—were, in short, those excesses, and that wickedness, in the contemplation of which Mr. Tierney said, he first learned to regard France as *an* odious tyranny;—would the principles which could lead to all these things be classed by him with the mere metaphysical abstractions



of heated, over-zealous, theorists? He would still persist, (at least he had given the promise of considerable resistance to all arguments to the contrary) in saying that it was intended to wage war against principles. "It is not so," said Mr. Pitt, "we are not in arms against the opinions of the closet, nor the speculations of the schools. We are at war against armed opinions, we are at war against those opinions which the sword of audacious, unprincipled, and impious innovation seeks to propagate amidst the ruins of empires, the demolition of the altars of all religions, the destruction of every venerable, and good, and liberal institution, under whatever form of polity they have been raised; and this, in spite of the dissenting reason of men, in contempt of all that lawful authority which, in the settled order of things, superior talents and superior virtues attain, crying out to them not to enter on holy ground, nor to pollute the stream of eternal justice; admonishing them of their danger, whilst, like the genius of evil, they mimic their voice, and, having succeeded in drawing upon them the ridicule of the vulgar, close their day of wickedness and savage triumph with the massacre and waste of whatever is amiable, learned, and pious, in the districts which they have overrun. Whilst the principles avowed by France, and acted upon so wildly,



held their legitimate place, confined to the circles of a few ingenious and learned men; whilst these men continued to occupy those heights which vulgar minds could not mount; whilst they contented themselves with abstract inquiries concerning the laws of matter, or the progress of mind, it was pleasing to regard them with respect; for while the simplicity of the man of genius is preserved untouched, if we will not pay homage to his eccentricity, there is, at least, much in it to be admired. Whilst these principles were confined in that way, and had not yet bounded over the common-sense and reason of mankind, we saw nothing in them to alarm, nothing to terrify; but their appearance in arms changed their character. We will not leave the monster to prowl the world unopposed. He must cease to annoy the abode of peaceful men. If he retire into the cell, whether of solitude or of repentance; thither we will not pursue him; but we cannot leave him on the throne of power."

The writings of the economists and philosophers, (or, rather, *philosophists*) of monarchical France, of the Voltaires, the Condorcets, the Diderots, the D'Alemberts, the La Meteries, and the Mirabeaus, here referred to by Mr. Pitt, however they might be the subjects of calm contemplation to surrounding nations, were



pregnant with the most serious mischiefs to the land which gave them birth. By gradually undermining every religious and moral principle, by holding up to ridicule, institutions consecrated by the veneration of ages, by converting the most sacred things into objects of derision, they ultimately succeeded in producing that *state of mind* in France, without the pre-existence of which, the "bold bad men," who first unfurled the bloody standard of revolt, would, in all probability, have failed in their efforts to subvert the throne, to demolish the altar, and to destroy the whole fabric of political and civil society, in that ill-fated country. A more pestiferous race of beings than these literary conspirators never combined to achieve the dark purposes of universal destruction. Leagued, as it were, equally against the cross of Christ, and the sceptre of the Bourbons, they artfully insinuated their principles of impiety and treason, into the light, frivolous, and credulous, minds of their countrymen, through the acceptable medium of joke, ridicule, and sarcasm, which ever found a favourable reception with a Frenchman. It is not meant to deny that the corruptions and superstition which human artifice had introduced into the established religion of France, supplied abundance of materials for such a conspiracy; but the arguments by which



it was attempted to expose these, were equally applicable, and meant to be equally applied, to the pure, unsophisticated religion of the primitive church. Their main object was to relieve men from the dread of present responsibility, and of future punishment; to take away the strongest inducements to good, and the most potent dissuasives from bad, conduct; and, regarding only the temporal effects of thus brutifying the human species, they scrupled not to rob them, with unfeeling malignity, of that hope which can alone render the burthen of life supportable to a Christian; and of that consolation which can alone support him in the last stage of mortality.—Having thus opened the copious “Springs of error, guilt, and sorrow,” to poison the minds, to corrupt the principles, and to debauch the hearts, of their countrymen, these pseudo-philosophers, looking round on the wide-wasting scene of ruin which opened itself to their view, as the natural fruits of their own machinations, lived long enough to *feel*, and most of them to *acknowledge*, the impotence, as well as the wickedness, of their *philosophistical* system. And, in those moments when the infirmity of human nature triumphs over the vanity of reason, and the pride of philosophy, they deplored with bitter anguish, and heart-rending remorse, the fatal delusion which



they had themselves created, and the loss of those religious comforts which the gospel alone supplied, and which they, with unchristian prodigality, had foolishly thrown away. The horrible effects of these principles have been sufficiently manifested in the *moral revolution* which they have produced, more or less, in every country, and in the general desolation which they have occasioned in most. But, still, as Mr. Pitt declared, they supplied no grounds for hostile interposition, on the part of foreign powers, until they were reduced to practice, in a way which interfered with the safety and independence of neighbouring states; until, in short, they not only wore a warlike aspect, but actually assumed the helmet and the sword.

Mr. Pitt produced some farther instances in illustration of the confusion of Mr. Tierney's ideas; who had said, that as the French republic and liberty could not exist together, he, as a friend to liberty, could not be a friend to France. Yet, in almost the same breath, he had declared, that he would not vote for any thing which did not tend to secure the liberties of that country; though to give him the benefit of his own proposition, not to wish the overthrow of France, was not to wish for the preservation of English liberty. Indeed, he had said, he would vote nothing for the purpose of overthrowing that tyranny, or, as he very strangely added, the



rights and liberties of France! But how, it was asked, would he maintain his character of consistency, while he would not vote for any measure which went to overthrow the power of a government, in the contemplation of which he had discovered a gulph in his mind between the ideas of its existence, and of the existence of liberty?

As the assertion had been made, by Mr. Tierney, that a republic in France was not contrary to the safety of other countries, and not incongruous to the state of France itself, he was called upon to reconcile this opinion with the admission, that liberty and the French republic could not exist together. Mr. Pitt, however, declared, that it had never entered his mind to make the overthrow of the French Republic the *sine quâ non* of negotiation or peace. If the republican regimen were characterized by the sobriety of reason, affording nourishment, strength, and health, to the members of the community; if the government were just and unambitious, as wisdom and sound policy dictated; if order reigned in her senates, morals in the private walk of life; and in their public places there were to be found the temples of their God, supported in dignity, and resorted to with pious awe and strengthening veneration by the people; there would be in France the reality of a well-regulated state, under whatever deno-



mination, but *obruit malè partum, malè retentum, malè gestum imperium*. Whilst republican France continued what she then was, then, Mr. Pitt declared, he would make war against republican France; but if he should see any chance of the return of a government which did not threaten to endanger the existence of other governments, he would not be the man to breathe hostility against it. He must first see the change of fortune to France and to Europe make its progress with rapid and certain steps before he relaxed in the assertion of those rights, which, dearer to Britons than to the whole world besides, because by them better understood, and more fully enjoyed, were the common property, the links of union, of the regular governments of Europe. He must regard as an enemy, and treat as such, a government which was founded on those principles of universal anarchy, and frightful injustice, which, sometimes awkwardly dissembled, and sometimes insolently avowed, but always destructive, distinguished it from every other government in Europe.

While Ministers were employed in the adoption of necessary measures for repressing the dangerous ambition, and counteracting the hostile designs, of our foreign enemies, their attention, and that of the country, were again directed to the insidious machinations of domes-



tic traitors. In fact, the society of United Irishmen, undismayed alike by the defeat of their late desperate efforts, and by the undeserved lenity which had followed it, were still active in their endeavours to produce the separation of the two kingdoms, by an extension of their anarchical principles, and by recourse to the same means for their diffusion, and for their practical application, which they had adopted previous to the rebellion of 1798. They still maintained a close correspondence with France, and kept an accredited agent at Paris; and their boast of having made a common cause with the disaffected in Scotland, and in England, proved to be well-founded. In short, societies, in both these countries, had been formed on the same principles, and having the same object, with the United Irishmen. In imitation of their policy, the United Britons had sent an agent to Paris, a man of the name of Ashley, who had officiated as Secretary to the seditious societies, and who had been arrested on a charge of High Treason, in 1794;\* meetings were holden to contrive the means of procuring arms, to enable them to co-operate with a French force, which

\* See Report of the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons, ordered to be printed, 15th March 1799, pp. 22, 23.



their agent was instructed to solicit,\* as necessary to secure their emancipation. They took means

\* The agent sent to France, by this society, was entrusted with the following "Address of the Secret Committee of England to the Executive Directory of France :"

*" Health and Fraternity.*

" CITIZEN DIRECTORS,

" We are called together, on the wing of the moment, to communicate to you our sentiments. The citizen who now presents them to you, *and who was the bearer of them before*, having but a few hours to remain in town, expect not a laboured address from us ; but plainness is the great characteristic of Republicans.

" Affairs are now drawing to a great and awful crisis ; tyranny, shaken to its basis, seems about to be buried in its own ruins. With the tyranny of England, that of all Europe must fall. Haste, then, Great Nation ! pour forth thy gigantic force ? Let the base despot feel thy avenging stroke, and let one oppressed nation carol forth the praises of France at the altar of liberty.

" We saw, with rapture, your proclamations ; they met our warmest wishes, and removed doubts from the minds of millions. Go on ! England will be ready to second your efforts.

" The system of borrowing, which has hitherto enabled our tyrants to disturb the peace of a whole world, is at an end ; they have tried to raise a kind of forced loan ;—*it has failed !* Every tax diminished that revenue it was intended to augment, and the voluntary contributions produce almost nothing. The aristocracy pay their taxes under that mask ; the poor workmen in large manufactories have been forced to contribute under the threat of being turned out of employ ; even the army have



to seduce the soldiers and sailors, administered oaths of secrecy, and neglected no measure which

been called upon to give a portion of their pay to carry on the war ; by far the greater part have peremptorily refused to contribute to so base a purpose, and the few that have complied, have, in general, been cajoled, or reluctantly compelled to it.

“ Englishmen are no longer blind to their most sacred claims ; no longer are they the dupes of an imaginary constitution ; every day they see themselves bereft of some part of the poor fragment of democracy they have hitherto enjoyed ; and they find that, in order to possess a constitution, they must *make one*.

“ Parliamentary declaimers have been the bane of our freedom. National plunder was the object of every faction, and it was the interest of each to keep the people in the dark ; but the delusion is past ! the Government has pulled off its disguise, and the very men who, under the semblance of *moderate Reform*, only wished to climb into power, are now glad to fall into the ranks of the people. Yes, they have fallen into the ranks, and there they must ever remain, for Englishmen can never place confidence in them.

“ Already have the English fraternized with the Irish and Scots, and a delegate from each now sits with us. The sacred flame of liberty is rekindled, the holy obligation of brotherhood is received with enthusiasm ; even in the fleets and the armies\* it makes some progress. Disaffection prevails in both and United Britain burns to break her chains.

\* About this time seditious hand-bills were industriously circulated among the troops to excite them to mutiny ; and numbers of United Irishmen were detected on board our ships, tried, and convicted of sedition.

*See Appendix to the Report, &c.*



could strengthen their hopes of success in their wild and desperate project.

Government had contrived to watch these traitors with a vigilant eye, and having, at the beginning of 1799, collected sufficient proofs of their views and intentions, Mr. Secretary Dundas presented to the House of Commons, on the twenty-third of January, various papers and documents relating to this conspiracy, which were immediately referred to a Committee of Secrecy. It was not till the eigh-

“ Fortunately we have no leader ; avarice and cowardice have pervaded the rich, but we are not, therefore, the less united. Some few of the opulent have, indeed, professed themselves the friends of democracy, but they have not acted ; they have considered themselves as distinct from the people, and the people will, in its turn, consider their claims to its favour as unjust and frivolous. They wish, perhaps, to place us in the front of the battle, that, unsupported by the wealth they enjoy, we may perish, when they may hope to rise upon our ruin. But let them be told, though we may fall through their criminal neglect, they can never hope to rule, and that England, once free, will not submit to a few political impostors.

“ United, as we are, we now only wait, with impatience, to see the Hero of Italy, and the brave Veterans of the Great Nation. Myriads will hail their arrival with shouts of joy ; they will soon finish the glorious campaign. Tyranny will vanish from the face of the earth, and, crowned with laurel, the invincible army of France will return to its native country, there long to enjoy the well-earned praise of a grateful world, whose freedom they have purchased with their blood.”



teenth of March, that this Committee made a report to the House, containing the result of their investigation, and a number of documents, in proof of the facts which they stated, and in confirmation of the conclusions which they drew. Here they traced the progress of the seditious Societies, in the different parts of the British dominions, from their origin to the present period; unfolding, in one connected chain of circumstances, their avowed objects, and their real designs. Adverting to the State Trials, in 1794, when the prisoners were acquitted, they observed, that the evidence given on those trials established, in the clearest manner, the grounds on which the Committees of the two Houses of Parliament had formed their Reports in 1794, and shewed, beyond a possibility of doubt, that the views of these persons, and their confederates, were, "in their nature, completely hostile to the existing Government and Constitution of this kingdom, and went directly to the subversion of every established and legitimate authority." Then, adverting to the conduct of the London Corresponding Society, subsequent to the passing of the Sedition and Treason Bills, as they were called, they shew that delegates were employed to travel through the country, and to disseminate their principles wherever they went. These delegates were sup-



supplied with instructions by the Secretary, (Ashley) in the name of the *Executive Committee*, and they were directed to persuade the people, whom they were to address, that the sole object of the Society was Parliamentary Reform. In one of these instructions they remark,—“ the design of the above articles is to remove misapprehensions relative to the safety of our association under the new laws. This part of your mission being effected, you are to strain every power of your mind to awaken the sleeping spirit of liberty ; and you are to call on our Fellow-Citizens to be ready with us, to pursue our common object, if it must be, to the scaffold, or rather (if our enemies are desperate enough to bear up every avenue to inquiry and discussion) to the field, at the hazard of extermination, convinced that no temper less decided than this will suffice to regain liberty from a bold usurping faction.— But, to the end that we may succeed by the irresistible voice of the people, you are to excite, in every society, the desire which animates our bosom to embrace the nation as brethren, and the resolution to bear every repulse from passion and prejudice, which fails to deprive us of the sure grounds of argument.” And in another part of the same instructions, the delegates are told,—“ You are always to



reflect, that you are wrestling with the enemies of the human race, not for yourselves merely, for you may not see the full day of liberty, but for the child hanging at the breast; and that the question, whether the next generation shall be free, or not, may greatly depend on the wisdom and integrity of your conduct in the generous missions which you, and your fellow-deputies, now take upon yourselves."\*

The researches of the Committee enabled them further to state, with confidence, that, at the meeting of the London Corresponding Society, for above two years before the present period, it had been avowed, that the object of the Society was to form a Republic, by the assistance of France. Reform in Parliament, or even annual elections, or universal suffrage, were, therefore, no longer mentioned.† In short, there never could be a doubt, that Reform was only adopted as a watch-word to amuse the credulous people who were duped by the more artful demagogues, and as well calculated to conceal, under a specious and plausible appearance, the revolutionary projects which they cherished in their minds, and from the contemplation of

\* *Report from the Committee of Secrecy*, p. 17; and Appendix, No. 4, p. 51.

† *Ibid.* p. 22.



which, had they been boldly presented to the view, numbers of their decided followers would probably have revolted.

For the same purpose, and with the same view, had *Parliamentary Reform* and *Catholic Emancipation* been the watch-words of the United Irishmen, whom the Committee represented as having been incessantly labouring to disseminate their principles, both by means of secret combinations among such of them as had found their way into the naval service, and by extending their Societies, both in the metropolis and in different parts of the kingdom. The extent to which these practices had prevailed, and (notwithstanding repeated instances of detection and punishment) *were still carried on in the fleet*,\* had been too fully demonstrated by the evidence which had appeared in a variety of Courts Martial.† It appeared, that oaths had been tendered by the Mutineers to the crews “to be United Irishmen, equal to their brethren in Ireland, and *to have nothing to do with the King or his Government* ;” and that they had acted in the professed expectation of assistance

\* Report from the Committee of Secrecy, p. 28.

† An Abstract of the Proceedings in these Courts-Martial will be found in the Appendix to this Report, Nos. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.



from France; with the express view of co-operating, *for the expulsion of the Protestants from Ireland, and the erection of a Roman Catholic Government* ;\* and it had been part of their plan to murder their officers, to seize on the ships, and to carry them to France or Ireland. In one instance, the following oath had been administered by these indefatigable adepts in sedition and treason.—“ I swear to be true to the Free and United Irish, who are now fighting our cause against tyrants and oppressors, and to defend their rights to the last drop of my blood, and to keep all secret; and I do agree to carry the ship into Brest the next time the ship looks out a-head at sea, and to kill every officer and man that shall hinder us, except the master; and to hoist a green ensign with a harp on it; and afterwards to kill and destroy the Protestants.”† With these fana-

\* Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 28. This part of the Report of the Committee affords the strongest confirmation of the opinion which I have before advanced, that the Rebellion, in Ireland, was, on the part of the Papists engaged in it, grounded in religious motives, and had the extermination of Protestantism, and the establishment of Popery, for its leading object. It is only a matter of surprize that the government could sanction a doubt of this fact, or that any one could harbour such a doubt, after the strong and incontrovertible proofs which have been adduced in support of it.

† Ibid.



tical traitors, who now, that they were not under the immediate direction and superintendence of their chiefs, were as free from disguise as they were from remorse, the extirpation of Protestants seems to have been constantly uppermost in their minds, and to have been avowed without scruple or reserve; and it was, no doubt, considered by them as a pious work, which would secure them a remission of all their sins.

The mutineers in another ship were proved to be connected with Corresponding Societies at Nottingham. The oath which they had attempted to administer was "to carry the ship into an enemy's port, either French, Dutch, or Irish;" and they meant, in the event of being brought into action with an enemy's ship, to shoot their own officers on the quarter-deck.

While these proceedings of the United Irishmen in the fleet exhibited a dreadful picture of their sanguinary designs, and of the similarity of their views and principles to those which had produced so much calamity and bloodshed in Ireland, their conduct on shore had been equally atrocious. It was proved, to demonstration, that, among the various bodies enlisted in any part of Great Britain, for the purposes of sedition and treason, the



Societies which had been formed by the United Irishmen in this country were, in all respects, the most formidable, particularly at that moment, whether considered with a view to their combinations, and their actual numbers, or the atrocious nature of the designs of which they were preparing, in a very short time, to attempt the execution in direct co-operation with France. The danger to be apprehended from these Societies was much increased, by the constant communication which they maintained with the Societies in Ireland; by their mutual confidence in each other, and by the alarming circumstance of their being, at that moment, subject to the same secret direction, and to the same chiefs. Indeed, the unity of design, and the chain of connection, were strongly proved by an incidental circumstance, that of the impression of the seal used by the 'London Society' being the same with that of a seal found on Lord Edward Fitzgerald, at the time of his apprehension. The Members of these Societies had been long considerable; many Irish, ordinarily resident in England, chiefly among the lowest classes of the community, had been gradually induced to become Members. But the most active part consisted of those Irish Rebels, who had fled to this country, rendered desperate by their crimes, not daring to return



to Ireland, and either unable to make their way to the countries subject to France, or not receiving sufficient encouragement to attempt it, they remained here, waiting for the opportunity of executing those violent and desperate projects, to which they had become familiar;—and they appeared to be under the direction of some persons of a higher class, who sometimes furnished pecuniary aid, and who formed the Committee, by means of which a constant correspondence was carried on, through Hamburgh, with France.\*

Among these plans there was good reason to believe that, early in 1798, it was seriously in agitation among the conspirators in Ireland, to convey, in small vessels, from Ireland to England, a great number of united Irishmen; and to land them on different parts of the coast, with instructions to divide themselves into small bodies, and to endeavour to make their way to the capital, in a manner the least liable to suspicion, under the disguise of those trades and occupations in which the Irish, commonly resorting hither, are principally engaged.—Their object was represented to have been that of co-operating with the Corresponding Society in effecting an insurrection in London, at the

\* Reports of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 30.



time of the explosion of the rebellion in Ireland, for the purpose of distracting the military force, and of preventing reinforcements being sent to that country; and the plan was said to have failed, from the Corresponding Society shrinking from the execution of it. About the same period another project was secretly formed for collecting, at one point, a chosen body of the most determined of the United Irish employed on the river Thames, to whom a new oath of secrecy, obedience, and fidelity, was to be administered. Large rewards were to be promised. They were to be kept wholly ignorant of the precise service which they were intended to perform, till the moment of its execution, which was to take place as soon as an attack on some part of the coast, by the French, should be announced. They were then to be privately armed with daggers, to be put under leaders of known talents and courage, and formed into three divisions, and were to make an attack, by surprize, at the same moment, on both Houses of Parliament, on the Tower, and on the Bank.\*

The intelligence which had, from time to time, been obtained by Government, respecting the plans and proceedings of the conspirators,

\* Ibid.



the seizure and detention of some of their intended leaders, and, possibly, the timidity or reluctance of some of the parties concerned, prevented any open attempt to realize these extravagant designs, when they were first in contemplation.—But, notwithstanding the continuance of every precaution, and, although the conspirators could not be ignorant of the prepared and formidable force, and of the determined spirit, and general loyalty with which such an enterprize would be immediately resisted, the Committee had acquired undoubted proofs, that plans of this nature were now, more than ever, in agitation. Attempts were actually making, by agents from Ireland, to concert, with the French Government, the time for a fresh and general insurrection in Ireland. Intelligence had been received that, in the ports of France, the utmost diligence was used in preparing another expedition to co-operate with the rebels in that kingdom. And a plan was still in agitation for creating an insurrection in London, in order to divert the attention of the military from the points of attack.\*

After detailing the various circumstances of the foul conspiracy which had come under

\* Ibid. p. 29, 30.



their cognizance, the Committee proceeded to state the impression which they had made upon their minds, and to suggest the means which to them appeared proper for checking the progress of this destructive spirit. They stated, that the safety and tranquillity of these kingdoms had, at different periods, from the year 1791 to the present time, been brought into imminent hazard, by the traitorous plans and practices of societies, acting upon the principles, and devoted to the views, of our inveterate foreign enemy. That, although the society of United Irishmen had alone been enabled to attain its full strength and maturity; yet the societies instituted on similar principles in this country had all an undoubted tendency to produce similar effects, if they had not been checked by the general demonstrations of the zeal and spirit of his Majesty's faithful subjects, and by the timely and judicious use of those extraordinary powers which Parliament had, in its wisdom, from time to time, confided to his Majesty's government. That, either directly or indirectly, a continual intercourse and connection had been maintained between all these societies in Great Britain and Ireland, and that the real objects of the instigators of these proceedings, in both kingdoms, were no other than the entire overthrow of the British constitution,



the general confiscation of property, and the erection of a democratic republic, founded on the ruins of all religion, and of all political and civil society; and framed after the model of France.

The vigorous resistance opposed to the rebellion in Ireland, the success of the measures which had been employed for detecting and defeating the designs of the conspirators here, and the general and ardent spirit of loyalty and attachment to the laws and constitution, had hitherto counteracted the progress of the mischief, and averted impending danger; but even these circumstances by no means appeared to the Committee to justify the hope, that the mischief was eradicated, or the danger passed. The principles and views of the conspirators remained unchanged. Their reliance on the assistance and co-operation of France, by which they expected ultimately to effect their purposes, continued undiminished. And the system of those secret societies, which were at once the instruments of seditious conspiracy at home, and the channel of treasonable correspondence with France, though in many parts broken and interrupted, was by no means destroyed. The activity of the societies in their endeavours to gain proselytes kept pace with the hostile preparations of the enemy; and the principle of secrecy, generally enforced



by unlawful oaths, which was the great characteristic of these societies, peculiarly fitted them for the most desperate enterprizes, and, by holding out the prospect of security, increased the means of seduction. It had, at the same time, an obvious tendency to elude detection in the first instance, and to defeat legal inquiry in the next. To this principle, therefore, in the opinion of the Committee, such farther measures as Parliament in its wisdom might think fit to adopt for the public safety, should be more immediately and decisively pointed.

The Committee expressed their satisfaction at the powers which, in conformity to the ancient practice, and true principles of the constitution, had, from time to time, as the urgency required, been confided to his Majesty's government; and they felt it their duty particularly to remark, that the power of arresting and detaining suspected persons, (a remedy so constantly resorted to by our ancestors, in all cases of temporary and extraordinary danger) had, under the present new and unprecedented circumstances, been found particularly efficient. It had greatly interrupted and impeded the correspondence with the enemy, and had checked, from time to time, the progress and communication of sedition and treason at home. But from particular circumstances, of which the



Committee had obtained a knowledge, they were compelled to remark, that the good effects of this measure would be rendered more complete, and the public tranquillity better secured, if the leading persons who had been, or might be thereafter, detained on suspicion of treasonable practices, were in future to be kept in custody in places sufficiently distant from the metropolis.

The whole of the secret information which had been laid before the Committee had strongly confirmed them in their opinion of the necessity of confiding these extraordinary powers to his Majesty's government; and the very circumstance which created that necessity, and which continued, at this time, to operate more powerfully than ever, had rendered it their peculiar study to abstain from disclosing, in its full extent, the particular information, of which they had stated to the House the general result, and on which their judgment was founded; but they trusted that they had laid before the House sufficient grounds to justify their persuasion, that the multiplied and various attempts, by which the enemies to their country carried on their dangerous conspiracies, could only be defeated by a corresponding vigilance on the part of government, and by the exercise of such additional powers, as might, from time to time,



be entrusted to it by Parliament, and might be best adapted to the peculiar exigency of the moment. And although they did not think it any part of their province to suggest particular measures, the consideration of which must be left to the wisdom of Parliament, they could not forbear particularly and earnestly to press their unanimous opinion, that the system of secret societies, the establishment of which had, in other countries, uniformly preceded the aggression of France, and, by facilitating the progress of her principles, had prepared the way for her arms, could not be suffered to exist in these kingdoms, compatibly with the safety of their government and constitution, and with their security against foreign force and domestic treason.

But if this growing and formidable evil could be effectually repressed, and if the same system of vigilance and precaution which had been successfully adopted for some years past, was adhered to, there was every reason to look forward with confidence to the ultimate disappointment and defeat of the projects which had been so long pursued by our foreign and domestic enemies. Impressed with a just sense of the blessings enjoyed under our happy constitution, which distinguished this country from every nation in Europe, all ranks and con-



ditions in society had shewn their determination to preserve those blessings entire, and had stood forward with a becoming ardour and alacrity in their defence. While this laudable spirit continued to pervade every part of the kingdom, and while the wisdom of the legislature encouraged and directed its exertions for the public safety, the committee entertained a full conviction, that the religion, the laws, and the constitution of Great Britain, and with them the interests and happiness of all classes of his Majesty's subjects, would, in the midst of surrounding danger and calamity, and in spite of every machination at home or abroad, rest, under the protection of Divine Providence, on the surest basis, secured by the energy and firmness of the government, and by the courage, the patriotism, and the virtue, of the nation.\*

This report unfolded a complicated scene of treason and rebellion, and afforded a strong proof of the truth of a remark which has often been made, that Jacobinism is *an active principle*; its votaries are never in a quiescent state; detection only serves as a motive for increased circumspection; and it most unhappily appears, that continued rigour, and exemplary punishment, are alone adequate to secure

\* Report from the Committee of Secrecy. Pp. 32, 33.



society from the horrible effects of its murderous combinations.

On the 19th of April, Mr. Pitt took up the subject of the report in the House, and proposed, as remedies for the evils which it detailed, to renew the act for enabling his Majesty to arrest and detain persons suspected of high treason, with some amendments; and to pass another act for the suppression of sedition and seditious societies. The proposed amendment in the first of these acts, was the introduction of a clause to empower his Majesty to transfer persons arrested under the act to any place within the kingdom, which might be deemed eligible. The reason assigned for this regulation was, that, both in England and in Ireland, the designs of the conspirators had continued to be conducted under the direction of persons in custody, on charges of being the authors of the conspiracy, or guilty upon their own confession.

Secret societies, Mr. Pitt observed, were, in their nature, totally repugnant to the genius of the British Constitution, and strange to the habits of the nation. They were clearly of foreign growth; and while the Parliament were bound to discourage them, they could employ, with the more satisfaction, the strong measures which were necessary for their suppression,



because they must be sensible that they did not trench upon the principles, or the spirit, of that liberty which we inherited from our ancestors; that we did not impair those privileges which gave sanction to the great right of petition in all recognized classes of men, and with none of which these new descriptions of persons could at all be confounded. The societies in question were now so clearly proved to be such an abuse of the privileges of the British Constitution, so entirely inconsistent with all government, that they ought immediately to be suppressed. But, as all the members might not be equally implicated in the guilt of the society, it was proposed, in the intended regulations, to make a distinction between those who had been misled, and those who were decidedly criminal. On this account, the measures for suppressing these bodies were to be only prospective, not to aim at punishment, but prevention. A mark was to be set on the house where the pestilential contagion prevailed, and then those who entered would deserve to perish. It was therefore to be enacted, that if any person, after a certain day, should continue to be a member of such societies, they should, upon summary conviction before a magistrate, be liable to a fine, to be summarily inflicted; but as there would be different degrees of guilt, it



was proposed to give an option to proceed by summary conviction and fine, or by way of indictment in any court of record, leaving it to the discretion of the court to punish the offenders by fine or imprisonment; or, in cases of greater aggravation, by transportation. The masters of the house, whether public or private, at which unlawful societies should assemble, were to be subjected to a fine. Another part of the bill went to provide a remedy for an evil which had lately been felt to a great extent.—Debating Societies had become very frequent, and were so conducted, that they had an evident tendency to undermine the morals of the people. Some time before, lectures of the most seditious tendency had been publicly delivered; and when a law had been passed to prohibit them, they only changed their form, by assuming the title of historical lectures, but, in reality, remained substantially the same. Discussions of this nature, Mr. Pitt truly remarked, in such hands as they were entrusted to, and with the audience to whom they were addressed, were employed to attack all religion, government, and society; and though in the outset they might not so directly lead to the consequences which it was the object of the conspirators in this country to attain, they ultimately tended, like the writings of the



French philosophers, to prepare the minds of men for those horrors and calamities which were the infallible consequences of the principles now afloat in the world. To prevent such dangerous abuses, it was a part of the proposed measure to extend the provisions against seditious lectures and political discussions, to all places where money was taken at the door, making that the criterion, and putting them upon the footing of disorderly houses, unless where a license had been previously taken out, and where they were subject to the inspection of a magistrate. By this regulation no innocent pursuit or amusement would be obstructed, and the public would be protected from an evil of serious magnitude.

Another part of the plan for infusing poison into the public mind, it was the object of this bill to provide against. It had been the proud and distinguishing principle of the law of England, to cherish the liberty of the press, as the most powerful bulwark of civil liberty. It certainly was one, from the proper use of which the greatest advantages had been derived, but from the perversion and abuse of which the greatest mischiefs had ensued. It had, therefore, been the object of the law of this country, without imposing any previous restraint, to secure a subsequent responsibility in the author



and publisher, if they should be guilty of private libels, or of public treason.

From the laws already existing, and the general spirit of loyalty in the great mass of the community, libels of any magnitude were not likely to escape punishment. Indeed, though formerly so prevalent, they were, at this time, much restrained, by the vigilance and vigour displayed by writers whose efforts were honourably directed to the propagation of sound principles. Unfortunately, however, the liberty of the Press had been abused, in a way most calculated to pervert and mislead the lower class of people. Instead of being employed to communicate knowledge and instruction, it had been perverted to give false and imperfect representations of facts, and inadequate or improper discussions of subjects, in no wise adapted to those to whom they were addressed, and fitted to produce the greatest mischief to them, and, ultimately, to the public itself. Hence, had been prosecuted to such an extent, the plan of disseminating hand bills, tending to poison the minds of the people, to deprave their morals, to pervert their loyalty, and to undermine their religion. Against this novel species of mischief, some new provisions were necessary, the object of which would be always to have a responsible author or publisher.



Such a regulation was strictly in the spirit of the constitution. If, in its application, it was new, it was because the evil was likewise new, while the remedy was so unexceptionable in its nature, that it must secure the approbation of all who valued public morals and public tranquillity. It was proposed, therefore, to have the name of the publisher affixed to every hand-bill, as to every other species of publication; and to have every press registered. Such a regulation, Mr. Pitt contended, would not injure the cause of science, literature, and improvement, or even interfere with any innocent amusement, while it would secure the public against the circulation of anonymous treason, sedition, or impiety, by which, in the quarters most exposed, the pillars of morality, religion, and government, were attacked. Bills to accomplish these salutary objects were prepared, and passed into laws, in the course of the session.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

Irish affairs—State of Ireland, from her first connection with England to the rebellion of 1798—Efforts of the Catholics to produce a separation of the two countries—The Catholic Priests exhort their flocks, previous to the rebellion in 1641, not to give their votes to Protestant candidates—Imperfect state of the representation in Ireland—Abuse of the elective franchise by the Catholics—Their conduct, the natural result of their religious principles—An union of Great Britain and Ireland projected by Mr. Pitt—The King's message to Parliament, on the subject—Debate on the message—Address moved by Mr. Dundas—Opposed by Mr. Sheridan, who moves an amendment—He ascribes the evils prevalent in Ireland to the ignorance and poverty of the people—Denies the competency of Parliament to conclude an union—Moves an amendment—Address supported by Mr. Canning—Mr. Pitt's speech—Censures Mr. Sheridan's doctrine as leading to jacobinism—Asserts the competence of Parliament—Contrasts the former statements of Opposition, relative to the defects in the Irish Constitution, with their present eulogies, on the same system—Shews the settlement of 1782 not to have been *final*—Displays the advantages of an union to both countries—Proves its necessity, from the evils arising from the present state of parties in Ireland—Instances the case of the Regency, to prove that a diffe-



rence on points of primary importance might subsist between the two separate Parliaments—Mr. Sheridan's amendment rejected, and the address adopted—Public discussions of the same subject in Ireland—Great ferment occasioned by it in that country—Tract in favour of the Union, by Mr. Edward Cooke—Meeting of the Irish Bar—They decide against the Union—Resolution of the Corporation of Dublin against the Union—The bankers and merchants of Dublin pass similar resolutions—Meeting of the Irish Parliament—The Viceroy's speech—Address carried in the House of Lords without a division—Majority of *one* only in favour of the address in the Commons—Lord Castlereagh condemns the rejection of the plan without examination—The address rejected, on the report, by a majority of five—The members who voted with the minister are insulted by the populace—Mr. Pitt unfolds his plan of an Union to the British House of Commons—Expresses a hope that the measure will be ultimately carried—Takes a comprehensive view of the question in all its bearings—Supports his own sentiments by those of Mr. Foster, on the question of the commercial propositions—Proves Mr. Foster's former opinion to be directly opposite to his present opinion—Considers the measure as necessary for the security of Ireland—Takes a view of the religious disputes in Ireland—Considers all questions relating to the Catholic claims as more likely to be impartially discussed in an united, than in a separate, legislature—Remark upon Mr. Pitt's motion, respecting tithes, in Ireland—Commercial benefits to be derived by Ireland from the Union—Ireland indebted to the liberality of the British Parliament for her present advantages in trade—Mr. Pitt confutes the objections of Mr. Sheridan and others, who oppose the Union—Exposes the folly and dangerous tendency of the asserted principle of the sovereignty of the people—Shews the independence of Ireland not to be affected by the Union



—Adduces the instance of the advantages resulting to the Scotch from their Union with England, in proof of the benefits to be expected from a similar measure by Ireland —Proposes eight resolutions, as the ground-work of an Union—Mr. Sheridan opposes them—He compliments Mr. Pitt as an orator, but condemns him as a statesman—Moves an amendment, which is rejected by 140 votes against 15—Resumed debate on the question—The Union opposed by Mr. St. John—Mr. Grey's speech in opposition to it—Is answered by Mr. Dundas—Mr. Sheridan asserts that, if a sovereignty does not rest in the people, the House of Brunswick are usurpers—Adduces the revolution of 1688 in support of his position—The revolution proved to afford no sanction to such a principle—No appeal was made to the people on that occasion — Mr. Sheridan's own authority quoted to prove that the revolution was effected in contradiction to the sentiments of a majority of the people—Mr. Windham corrects a gross mistake on the part of Mr. Sheridan—He ridicules the preposterous notion of the sovereignty of the people—Reflections on that subject—The House of Lords concur in the resolutions of the Commons—They are carried up to the Throne—Curious specimen of British philanthropy—Resolutions transmitted to Ireland—Irish Parliament prorogued—Renewal of the discussions on the Union in 1800—The Catholics of Dublin pass resolutions against the Union—The Irish Parliament meet—Motion of Sir Lawrence Parsons, deprecating an Union, rejected by a majority of forty-two—Message from the Viceroy, recommending an Union to the consideration of Parliament—Lord Castlereagh's speech, in support of the measure—Proposes a compensation for the loss of Parliamentary interest —Thoughts on the subject—Contends that nothing but an Union can establish the security of the Protestant Church in Ireland—Remarks on the effect of the Union



on the question of Catholic emancipation—Mistatement respecting the relative numbers of Protestants and Romanists corrected—No pledge nor promise made by Mr. Pitt, or by his authority, to support the Catholic claims—The whole of the British Cabinet of that day appealed to in support of this fact—The Union most violently opposed by Mr. Grattan—He devotes the British Minister to “an *immortality of eternal infamy*”—His speech aptly characterized by an absentee—Specimen of Mr. George Ponsonby’s eloquence—He pronounces the House of Commons to be mad, and expresses his fears of being bitten—Sir John Parnell moves an address to the King, to dissolve the Parliament—The motion rejected by the House—Decision in favour of an Union carried by 158 votes against 115—The Irish House of Commons defended from the charge of inconsistency on this question—Debates on the same subject, in the Irish House of Lords—Lord Clare’s speech—The Union voted by a large majority—The King’s message to the British Parliament, communicating the Irish resolutions—Debates on the question—Mr. Pitt’s speech—Explains his sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and his reasons for the change which had taken place in his opinions on that question—Moves an address to the King—Mr. Grey opposes the address—Mr. Pitt’s reply—The address carried in both Houses, and the Union finally determined.

THE unsettled state of Ireland had long occupied the most serious attention of Mr. Pitt, every effort of whose comprehensive mind was directed to the discovery of some adequate means for composing the troubles which had so long distracted that unhappy country, for



removing the evils which seemed to frustrate the benevolent intentions of nature, and for rendering her a sound and wholesome member of the British empire. Indeed, the necessity of such an alteration as would afford, at least, a fair probability of producing this beneficial effect, had long been obvious. Whoever had attended to the situation of Ireland from the first period of her connection with England, to the rebellion of 1798,—whoever had examined her history during that period, could not refuse to acknowledge this truth. Not only the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland herself, but the grand object of consolidating the strength of the empire, pointed out the wisdom and expediency of such a change. In the infancy of this connection, the native Irish harboured the most implacable hatred against the English colonists, whom they considered as their conquerors and their oppressors; and though, at different times, they submitted themselves to the British Monarchs, and swore fealty and allegiance to them, they never failed to embrace every favourable opportunity for throwing off their yoke, and for expelling the English from their country. The pride of independence rendered the Irish insensible to the advantages of a connection with a wise and civilized nation; while their barbarous mode of life, and that indul-



gence in licentiousness of every kind, which their municipal laws not only tolerated but encouraged, made them extremely averse from those salutary restraints which the more sober discipline of English domination imposed.

After the Reformation, this enmity was considerably heightened by religious rancour, and the Irish had, on various occasions, recourse to the Pope, and to the Kings of France and of Spain, to enable them to effect, what they could not hope to achieve without foreign assistance, the expulsion of the English, and the separation of their native country from Great Britain. In the reign of Elizabeth, the natives of Irish and of English blood, between whom a violent antipathy had previously existed, first began to unite, and to coalesce under the banners of religion;\* and this coalition was completely effected in the reign of our first Charles, when it appeared that all the Catholics,† both of

\* Fynes Morrison, who was secretary to Lord Mountjoy, said, that the Lords of the Pale, all of English blood, were wavering; and the Earl of Desmond and his relations were attainted for rebellion.

† Hugh Oge Macmahon, one of the leading conspirators, who was apprehended in Dublin, on the night of the 22d of October, confessed,—“That all the lords and gentlemen in the kingdom that were papists were engaged in the plot, and that all the Protestants were to be killed that night.” His evidence was confirmed by that of many other rebels.



English and Irish descent, joined in the dreadful rebellion of 1641, the object of which was to separate Ireland from England, and to extirpate the Protestants. The same hostile disposition was manifested in the two subsequent reigns; and it is a lamentable fact, which speaks more than a volume of comments, that the only period of real tranquillity in Ireland, for the greater part of three centuries, was that during which the penal laws were in force, which laws were not enacted till after the revolution.

It has been observed, by one of the most able and intelligent of our historians, "that the religious spirit, when it mingles with faction, contains in it something supernatural and unaccountable, and that, in its operation on society, effects correspond less to their known causes, than is found in any other circumstances of government." The truth of this observation has been fully established by the example of every country in which religious feuds have prevailed, and by none more strongly than by that of Ireland. We are told, by Lord Strafford, in his State Letters on Ireland, during his Viceroyalty, that the Romish Priests and the Jesuits, in order to prevent the return of Protestant members to Parliament, previous to the rebellion of 1641, charged their flocks, at their



chapels, not to give their votes to any person of that persuasion, under pain of excommunication; and, on the explosion of the rebellion, one and forty papists were expelled from the House of Commons for having been engaged in it; and a resolution was then entered into, that no man should sit in that House who did not take the oath of supremacy.\* During the short period that the Irish papists were in possession of political power, after the abdication of James the Second, it was their constant object to effect a total excision of the Protestants, and to render Ireland wholly independent of England. What the state of Ireland was, subsequent to this period, previous to, and after, the repeal of the restrictive laws, has been already shewn. Whenever disaffection reared its head, separation from England was its prominent and unvarying object. It was, therefore, natural to suppose, that a consolidation of the two kingdoms, upon the same principle which had influenced, and regulated the union of England and Scotland, at the commencement of the century, would supply the best remedy to this glaring and growing evil. There were other circumstances besides those which have been already stated, circumstances connected with

\* Commons' Journals. Vol. I. pp. 293, 294.



the internal polity of Ireland, and, more immediately, with the Constitution of Parliament, which dictated the necessity of such a measure. A great portion of the Members of the House of Commons were under the immediate influence and direction of certain political leaders, in either House, without whose co-operation the ordinary business of the State could not be carried on. Hence the Government was, in a manner, dependent on this aristocratical party for its political existence. And when any of these great leaders abandoned the cause of Government, and opposed its measures, infinite confusion ensued. Such dependence of the Government on the heads of a party was highly pernicious in another point of view, for it compelled Ministers to yield implicitly to their demands, however unreasonable, and however exorbitant; to create places, and to grant pensions to their needy and hungry followers. The seats, in many close boroughs, were regularly sold, and, in some others, artful and factious adventurers, who regarded a seat in Parliament solely as the means of exchanging poverty and obscurity for wealth and celebrity, were returned; and these uniformly endeavoured, by seditious speeches, and popular harangues, to inflame the Popish multitude, already rendered disaffected by religious prejudice.



After the Romanists obtained, from the most inconsistent and shameless Parliament, which ever disgraced a country, the elective franchise, they united, as it was natural to suppose they would, in one compact body, under the guidance of their clergy, and resolved not to give their votes to any persons who would not enter into a solemn engagement to support their claims in Parliament, and to promote their interests upon all occasions.—The Catholic body, thus associated, and strengthened by the accession of many powerful Protestant auxiliaries, hoped, in process of time, to be enabled to gain an ascendancy, by the subversion of the Established Church; and their intemperate zeal, flowing from fanaticism, produced an extraordinary degree of feverish turbulence.

Such conduct, on the part of the Romanists, after the ample concessions which they had received from the State, and the full degree of civil liberty which they now enjoyed, could surprise those only who were ignorant of the force of religious prejudice, and of the natural operations of the human mind. Independent of the peculiar policy of their church, which renders the promotion of her interests a primary consideration with all her followers, the conviction which, we must suppose, they pos-



sessed of the superior purity of their own  
 faith, the doctrine of exclusive salvation which  
 that faith inculcates, and the spirit of conver-  
 sion which has, at all times, and in all coun-  
 tries, distinguished its professors; all com-  
 bined to supply the most powerful motives  
 which could stimulate the mind of man, parti-  
 cularly when unenlightened and uniformed, to use  
 every exertion for the extirpation of that dam-  
 nable heresy which they considered as destruc-  
 tive of the souls of all who cherished it, and  
 for the complete triumph of that church which  
 they regarded, not merely as the only true  
 church, but as the only possible road to salva-  
 tion. Whoever thought well of the Romanists,  
 whoever believed that they were upright and  
 honest, acting, in all they did, upon principle,  
 must also believe that they would do every  
 thing which their principles taught them was  
 right and proper to be done; and, consequently,  
 that, in seeking to overturn the Established  
 Church, and to raise their own on its ruins,  
 they only asserted a right, and discharged a  
 duty. If any mischiefs to the State, then,  
 arose from their efforts to attain their object,  
 the fault lay with that Parliament which had  
 entrusted to their hands the political power,  
 which their prejudices made them think it pro-



per to exercise for the destruction of the established institutions of the country.

With a Constituent body thus divided into two parties, which must be in a constant state of collision from the heat which religious divisions engender, and with an opposition in Parliament, well-skilled, and better disposed, to inflame their passions and prejudices, and to exasperate them against each other, Ireland, it was evident, would be perpetually subject to internal convulsions, and her government harassed by incessant rebellions.

Mr. Pitt had long revolved in his mind all the circumstances of this momentous case; and it was not without great deliberation, and without justly estimating the force of all the obstacles which he had to encounter, and of all the advantages which he hoped to obtain, that he finally resolved on attempting to produce an incorporate union of the two countries, as the best remedy, of which the nature of the case would admit, for the calamities which resulted from the present imperfect system. Having previously arranged all the materials of his plan, a message from the King to the House of Commons, was delivered on the 22d of January, in the year 1799, in which his Majesty told the House, that he was persuaded that the unremitting industry with which our enemies per-



severed in their avowed design of effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom, could not fail to engage the particular attention of Parliament; and he recommended it to the House to consider of the most effectual means of counteracting and finally defeating that design; and he trusted that a review of all the circumstances which had recently occurred, (joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interests) would dispose the Parliaments of both kingdoms to provide, in the manner which they judged most expedient, for settling such complete and final adjustment as might best tend to improve and perpetuate a connection essential for their common security, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British empire.

This message was taken into consideration the day after it was delivered, (Jan. 23d) when Mr. Dundas, having laid on the table of the House, various papers containing an account of the proceedings of certain societies in Ireland, and relative to the rebellion in that country, moved an address to his Majesty, pledging the House to proceed, with all due dispatch, to the consideration of the several interests recommended in the message to their most serious attention. No sooner was the address moved, than Mr. Sheridan rose to deprecate the measure of an union, as destructive of the independence



of Ireland; as inadequate to prevent a separation of the two kingdoms; and as ill calculated to remove the evils complained of. The disaffection to the King's government in Ireland, Mr. Sheridan ascribed solely to the ignorance and poverty of the people, and these he imputed to the "exactions and imposts of their overgrown landlords." That ignorance and poverty prevailed to a very great extent was, unhappily, but too true; and that they arise, in a great measure, from the mode of underletting lands, and from the absence of the great proprietors of land from the country, is equally certain. But it was surprising, after recent occurrences, that Mr. Sheridan should have totally overlooked one grand and prominent cause of disaffection,—religious prejudice, and the rancour which flowed from it. Indeed, it is possible he might mean to include this under the head of *ignorance*, which might fairly be considered as its parent. He contended that the causes of these evils should be removed before an union should be proposed; and he insisted, that the free opinions of the people of Ireland could not be collected, while there was an English army in the country. He moved an amendment to the address, beseeching his Majesty not to listen to the councils of those who should advise or promote the measure of an union, at the present crisis, and under the pre-



sent circumstances of the empire. After some judicious observations on Mr. Sheridan's speech by Mr. Canning, Mr. Pitt remarked, that the address would pledge the House to nothing more than to take into their consideration the subject recommended to their care by the King, and which was highly interesting to the welfare of the country. Mr. Sheridan, indeed, wished to preclude all consideration of the subject, and had boldly asserted, that the House possessed no legitimate power to render their deliberations effectual. In contradiction to the extraordinary position thus laid down, Mr. Pitt maintained, that the Parliaments of the two countries had full right and power to consent to an union if they thought it adviseable. If the Parliament of Ireland had no just power, or legitimate authority, without the immediate instructions, not of its constituents merely, but of the people of Ireland in the mass, to determine upon this subject, as little had the Parliament of England such authority, as little had the Parliament of Scotland that authority, as little had the Parliaments of England and Scotland that authority, when they agreed upon the union between the two kingdoms. An union, under which the prosperity of both had grown up and flourished; under which the laws of both had been improved; under which had been cherished a



principle of cordial co-operation, which had led to the happiness of Great Britain, and had rendered it the envy, and, he trusted, would make it the protection, of surrounding nations. "You sit in that chair, Sir;" said Mr. Pitt, "I stand here before you; the honourable gentleman himself addressed you this night; called upon this House to entertain a debate, without any right whatever; we are all totally destitute of legitimate authority, if the honourable gentleman is right in the principle he contended for to-night, on this part of the subject. Indeed, if he be right in that principle, you have no Parliament in England, possessed of legal and just authority at this hour; there is no act which you have performed for the last ninety years, however well intended, or however effectual for the happiness of the people of Great Britain, that can be said to be legitimate or legal."

Mr. Pitt declared he knew not what ideas Mr. Sheridan might entertain, or what aid he expected, or what countenance he would find ready to be given to his doctrine, that "Parliament is not competent to the discussion of this subject." He knew it led immediately to the system of universal right of suffrage in the people; to the doctrine, that each man should have an actual share in the government of the country, by having a choice for his representa-



tive ; and then went back to the whole system of jacobinism, which, he thought, had been pretty nearly exploded as soon as it came to be pretty well understood all over Europe. If Mr. Sheridan admitted this, then, and not till then, would his argument upon this head of the subject be intelligible and consistent ; for, without this, the whole of what he had said upon the matter would be quite obscure, if not altogether without a meaning. If the competence of Parliament, which fully and freely represented all the people of this country, (and here Mr. Pitt remarked that he was using no language of his own, but was following the approved language of our ancestors) were denied, there was an end to all the authority of the House, not on that point only, but on every other point.

It was deemed unnecessary, by Mr. Pitt, in this stage of the proceeding, to enter into any detail of the proposed plan, which would be, more properly, reserved for a future opportunity, when specific propositions would be submitted to the House. He, therefore, confined himself, at present, to an answer to Mr. Sheridan's speech, and to an avowal of his sentiments on many points to which the various topics introduced in that speech directly or indirectly referred ; and in doing this, he, of necessity, endeavoured to remove many false



impressions which had gone forth on the subject, particularly in Ireland, where it had undergone a long and warm discussion, in innumerable pamphlets to which it had given birth. Mr. Pitt observed, that, however desirable an union might be, and he was convinced that it was, yet he knew it had, and must have, its difficulties. He knew it was, of necessity, liable to a thousand difficulties, because it was subject to a thousand prejudices, and partial objections; to sentiments hastily conceived by some, and eagerly adopted by others; to local and confined views, to personal affections, and to a multitude of impediments, which, however firm their own opinions might be of the indispensable necessity of the measure, yet had induced his Majesty's Ministers not to enter upon the detail at that moment.

Referring to the course of proceedings now intended to be adopted, he said that, after a message came from the Throne, recommending, in substance, an union between the two kingdoms, nothing in the first instance was proposed but a general address, pledging the House to nothing more than to take the subject into serious consideration; and a day was stated on which the outline of the plan would be submitted to Parliament. Such was the grand principle of the proceeding, to which Mr. Pitt



had supposed not the smallest objection could be urged. The question then, was, whether the subject was worthy of their deliberation or not. Mr. Sheridan had contended for the negative, in which case he was bound to prove, either that the actual state of Ireland was such as to require no remedy whatever, or that, if it did require a remedy, a better might be proposed than any which had an union for its basis; or that an union, at all events, must be such an evil that the House ought not to entertain the thought of it for a moment. Mr. Sheridan, however, had adduced no arguments in support of such an opinion: for many years past nothing had been heard from him and his friends but complaints and lamentations. They had been in the constant habit of declaiming, sometimes upon the unjust and cruel, at other times upon the inefficient and defective, system by which Ireland had been governed, not only in the executive, but also by the deliberative powers of the country. The House had often been reminded of the unfortunate distraction of all its parts of government, and of the evils which had resulted from the whole collectively; nay, they had been told, and that pretty confidently, by Mr. Fox, that the system by which Ireland was governed was radically defective; that, indeed, it was so full



of deformity in its very constitution, as that, if we wished to answer the cavils of those who disputed the beauty of the Constitution of Great Britain, we could not do better than desire them to look at her sister, who was so ugly, that, when she was beheld, all objections against the other would vanish. Mr. Sheridan was asked, how he had forgotten these things, and how it happened that he now saw none of these deformities? how he came, all at once, to be satisfied that this was an unjust picture of Ireland; that Ireland was as secure as it could be, and that her government wanted no remedy? Mr. Pitt had seen the Parliament of Ireland do much that deserved praise, but he had not seen enough to enable him to prove, that the happiness of that country was perfectly secure; he had not seen enough to prove, that there had not lately been there a desperate rebellion; he had not seen enough to prove, that the House should conclude that the safety of that part of the British empire was free from danger; he had not seen enough to prove, that there did not, at that hour, exist in Ireland evils which all must deplore, and which they had much more reason to deplore than they had to deplore those which Mr. Sheridan and his friends had so repeatedly, and so vehemently, pressed upon the attention of



the House. "I say," pursued Mr. Pitt, "that Ireland is subject to great and deplorable evils, which have a deep root, for they lie in the situation of the country itself; in the present character, manners, and habits, of its people; in their want of intelligence, or, in other words, their ignorance; in the unavoidable separation between certain classes; in the state of property; in its religious distinctions; in the rancour which bigotry engenders, and which superstition rears and cherishes."

Mr. Sheridan had told the House, that these were evils which could not be cured in a moment. Mr. Pitt knew they could not, but the question was, whether it would not be wise and prudent to adopt some plan by which that cure might be effected in the course of time? If, indeed, it could have been produced by what Mr. Sheridan, and his political associates, had often recommended to the House, by what they called a Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, the task would have been much easier than, in truth, it was now found to be; but Catholic Emancipation, and Parliamentary Reform, were pretexts used by some to cover designs of a very different nature. If such an object could be kept in view, and could be attained by calm, dispassionate, sober, investigation, no man would be readier than



himself, Mr. Pitt declared, to assent to any measure for that purpose.—But if the state of society were such, that laws, however wise in themselves, would be ineffectual as to their object, until the manners and customs of the people were altered; if men were in a state of poverty in which it was impossible they could have any comfort; if the progress of civilization depended, in a great measure, upon the distribution of wealth; if the improvement of that wealth depended very much upon the improvement of capital; if all the advantages to be derived from an increase of national wealth depended much upon the temper of the inhabitants; if these advantages, together with the still greater advantage of mental improvement, were all retarded by the distractions and divisions of party, by the blind zeal and phrenzy of religious prejudices, by old and furious family feuds;—if all these circumstances and objects combined to make a country wretched, what was the remedy? An impartial Legislature, standing aloof from local party connection, sufficiently removed from the scene of contending factions, to be the advocate or the champion of neither; being so placed as to have no superstitious reverence for the names and prejudices of ancient families, who had so long enjoyed the exclusive monopoly of cer-



tain public patronage and property, which custom had sanctioned, and which modern necessity might justify; a Legislature which would neither give way to the haughty pretensions of a few, nor open the door to popular inroads, to clamour, or to invasion of all sacred forms and regularities, under the false and imposing colours of philosophical improvement in the art of government. This was the thing which was wanted for Ireland. Where was it to be found? In that country, where the evils which had been enumerated existed, or in this? In other words, where was that Legislature to deliberate? In a place where the utmost effort of what was called Patriotism, amounted to nothing more than an aim at temporary popularity, as was evident from what had happened; or in a place where the discussion was calm and temperate? Certainly the latter; that is, in England. To neglect to establish such a Legislature, when the calls for its establishment were so numerous, so potent, and so imperative, and when it was possible to establish it, was an imprudence, in the mind of Mr. Pitt, which nothing could justify.—“ I say, also,” added he, “ that much of the evil which Ireland now labours under arises, unavoidably, from the condition of the Parliament of that country.



Mr. Pitt observed, that one of the defects to which he had adverted,—the want of introduction of capital into Ireland,—could only be removed by connexion and intercourse with Great Britain, which would improve the temper and manners, as well as the understandings of the people of Ireland; and by a Parliament which should entertain no jealousies arising from local prejudices; and this could only be the case when a Parliament should deliberate in England, and that, too, upon the interest of both countries united. It was upon that, and upon that only, the happiness of the people of Ireland depended. In answer to an objection which had been founded, to the present measure, on the ground that the regulations of 1782 were considered as a *final* adjustment, it was remarked by Mr. Pitt, that that adjustment finally settled the independence of the Irish Legislature; but he reminded the House, that a resolution had been then entered into by the Irish Parliament, declaring, in substance, that the interests of Great Britain and Ireland were inseparable, that the connexion ought to be founded on a solid and permanent basis, and that Ireland would adopt such measures as should be consistent with its own internal tranquillity, and as might be connected with the strength and stability of the whole of the British Empire. Here, then, was a proof upon



record, that something was left to be done after the Legislature of Ireland had gained its independence. This resolution was carried to the Throne, but nothing had yet been done in consequence of it. It was now proposed, not that Ireland should have some benefits, as part of the British Empire, but that she should be allowed to participate in all the blessings which England enjoyed.

For one hundred years England had pursued a very narrow policy with regard to Ireland. She had manifested a very absurd jealousy concerning the growth, produce, and manufacture of several articles, which would be done away by the plan now in contemplation. When there existed two independent Parliaments in one Empire, there could be no security for the continuance of their harmony and cordial co-operation. Every genuine patriot of both countries assented to the general proposition, that England and Ireland should stand or fall—should live and die, together; and yet, without an Union, there could be no security for the continuance of that sentiment. The happiness of both countries ought to be perpetual; but, as matters stood now, it was liable to a thousand accidents; it depended upon the violence of the moment; it might be governed, upon views of temporary popularity, or upon



the personal convenience of a few individuals;—a tenure by which no nation should hold its happiness.

These positions were not hastily advanced, but had a reference to the conduct of two champions of parties in the two countries, Mr. Grattan, who, Mr. Pitt said, had a large pecuniary reward for his labours; and Mr. Fox, who was the subject of great panegyric in England and in Ireland. These champions were satisfied when the Irish legislature was declared independent of the English. The former had, what was supposed to be, sovereign power; it had the power of dictating to the Executive authority, upon the questions of war and peace, in the same controlling manner as the Parliament of this country had;—but what security was there that they would both agree on all questions thereafter, in which the general interests of the British empire should be involved? Was it a difficult thing to suppose a case in which they might clash, and become, perhaps, as hostile to one another as any two independent bodies politic in Europe? Mr. Pitt had no difficulty in saying, that such a case might possibly happen, nor did he think that much was gained, by the declaration of the independence of the Irish Parliament, or ever would be gained, by the British empire, until there should



be some security that both legislatures would go on harmoniously together, upon all questions in which the general interests of the British empire were involved. Neither did he much admire the philosophy of that person who thought he had completed a beautiful new fabric, when he had only perfected the destruction of an old one, who called that destruction, "the most stupendous pile of human wisdom that ever was exhibited to the world." When he found such a man, after the act was passed, which declared the independence of the Irish Parliament, assenting to the principle of the resolution of a committee, stating that the connection between the two countries should be established by mutual consent on a solid and permanent basis, and when he found that such a resolution was carried to the Throne, as had been already observed, and when he reflected that nothing was afterwards done towards carrying that resolution into effect, he had the authority of that person and his friends, for saying, that what was done in declaring the Parliament of Ireland independent, was defective in a point which was indispensable for the happiness of the people of Ireland, and, indeed, of both countries. Mr. Pitt asserted then, that the *onus* lay upon those who opposed the Union, to shew its bad tendency, rather than upon Ministers to shew its probable



good effect, for their own conduct proclaimed the absolute necessity of something being done; it was incumbent upon all those who took a part in the discussion upon that subject, and who approved the measure—the *childish measure of the independence of the Parliament of Ireland!* without any security that the two Parliaments should never differ essentially upon any point in which the happiness of the whole empire might be involved, to shew it; and upon Mr. Sheridan, as much as upon any one, for he took an active share in the parliamentary proceedings to which he had alluded.

How stood the case in point of *experience*? Was there a probability, or was there not, that the Parliaments of the two countries might differ upon a point essentially interesting to the British empire? The House had a guide upon that subject. They might profit by experience. “I mean,” said Mr. Pitt, “by the case of the regency.” Mr. Sheridan had observed, that there was no difference between the two Parliaments, as to the Regent. There was, indeed, no difference as to the *person*; but there was an essential difference as to the *principle*; the Irish Parliament decided on one principle, the English Parliament on another, and their agreement, as to the person, was accidental;—and upon the distinct principles, on which the two



Parliaments proceeded, they might as well have differed upon the person who was to be Regent, as on the powers to be granted to him. Could any man say, that this was not an instance of an essential difference upon a point essential to the welfare of the British empire? or, could any man shew what security there was, that an essential difference upon some other object might not thereafter occur between the two Parliaments? That they had not hitherto differed in the great and momentous events which had been agitated before Parliament, was a good fortune which had arisen from one general cause, that of all descriptions of persons having united against one common enemy, with the exception only of a few, whose counsels, happily for both countries, and for the civilized part of the world, had lost all their influence. Would it be contended, that such difference, as occurred at the time of the regency, would never occur again? Would it be asserted, that when we come to treat for peace, for instance, or to consider any subject of alliance with a foreign power, or to move any question of trade or commerce, that then the local prejudices (which had great influence) might not occasion a difference between the two legislatures, upon points that might be essential to the welfare of both kingdoms? No matter what the cause of diffe-



rence was ; it was enough that such a difference might exist. A party in England might give the Throne one kind of advice by its Parliament ; a party in Ireland might give directly opposite advice, upon the most essential points of public welfare, upon a foreign alliance, upon the army, upon the navy, upon any branch of the public service, upon trade, upon commerce, or upon any point that might affect the prosperity of the empire at large. What would have been the consequence to both England and Ireland, had the dissensions in the latter country been the same, in point of force, against the Executive government in Parliament, since the commencement of the present war, as they were at the time when the Irish propositions were rejected ? Had those men, who were at the head of Opposition, in either country, possessed the confidence of any considerable part of the public, would it be maintained, that any Minister would have been able to save Great Britain or Ireland from destruction ? But, happily for us, happily for every part of the civilized world, the iniquity of the common enemy had produced a general Union ; else all the evils which had been already stated, together with the poison of jacobinism, would have come upon us, and such a complication would have soon completed the ruin of our Empire ; but, for-



fortunately, the counsels of those who favoured such principles were rejected with disdain, by the good sense of mankind at large. When, however, the cement by which the two legislatures had been held together should lose its efficacy, no security would remain for the continuance of their cordial co-operation; for the present state of society in Ireland, as well as its representation, which partook of its nature, was radically defective.

Mr. Pitt apologized for the length of his remarks in the present stage of the business. He had thought a great deal upon the subject; and what he had said was nothing but the result of his own observations. He was bound to convey to the House every information which it was in his power to give; but, however acceptable, or otherwise, his sentiments might be to either party in this country, or to those whom he respected on the other side the water, his duty compelled him to speak them freely. He saw the case so plainly, and he felt it so strongly, that there was no circumstance of apparent or probable difficulty, no apprehension of popularity, no fear of toil or labour, which should prevent him from using every exertion which remained in his power to accomplish this great work, on which, he was persuaded, depended the internal tranquillity of



Ireland, the interest of the British empire at large, and, he hoped he might add, the happiness of a great part of the habitable world. Mr. Sheridan's amendment was negatived, and the address carried, without a division.

Previous to the introduction of this subject into the British Parliament, it had undergone a great deal of discussion in Ireland. In order to sound the public opinion on the important question of an Union, in Ireland, a gentleman, holding a public situation there,\* published a pamphlet, in the winter of 1798, entitled, "*Arguments for and against an Union between Great Britain and Ireland considered.*" It was circulated by the government, with great industry, in every part of the sister kingdom, where it excited considerable alarm ; and gave rise to a controversy, which, as might be expected, was carried on with great warmth, and no small bitterness of invective. Indeed, for some weeks, both the press and the public attention in Ireland, were engrossed by the subject.

The bar were among the foremost to take the alarm, and indeed they were induced to exert themselves in the business, by more motives than a mere *amor patriæ*, a bare impulse

\* Mr. Edward Cooke, who was then under secretary at the castle.



of patriotism.\* On the 9th of December they had a meeting in Dublin, when Mr. Saurin moved, "That the measure of a legislative union of this kingdom and Great Britain is an innovation, which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propose, at the present juncture, to this country." A long debate, *of course*, ensued, where every member was an orator, and a division took place on a motion of adjourn-

\* In Mr Cooke's tract it had been observed,—“The chief opposition to the measure must be expected from the bar, who are supposed to be more personally interested against it, than any class in society. It is a general habit in the gentlemen of Ireland, to educate their sons at the Temple, and the number of barristers is much greater, in proportion, here than in England. And as the profession will not support, by any means, the numbers which pursue it, lawyers, in Ireland, extend their circle to politics, and are very numerous in Parliament, and extremely active in the business of it. In England, there are few lawyers in the House of Commons,\* whereas, in Ireland they are a formidable phalanx. Were a legislative union to take place, Irish lawyers would be deprived of the parliamentary market for their abilities and ambition; they could not attend the British Parliament without renouncing business; they would be entirely confined to professional prospects; and mere political emolument and situations would be taken from their grasp.—But the very reasons which make the bar oppose an union, are arguments in favour of it.”

\* This might be the case when Mr. Cooke wrote; but, at present, lawyers are nearly as numerous in the British, as they formerly were in the Irish, House of Commons.



ment, which was supported only by thirty-two votes, in opposition to one hundred and sixty-six, who approved the original question.

Five days after this meeting the corporation of Dublin held a *post assembly*, at which it was resolved, “ That, by the spirited exertions of the people and Parliament of Ireland, the trade and constitution thereof were settled on principles so liberal, that the nation had risen ever since rapidly in wealth and consequence. And, that having boldly defended the constitution in King, Lords, and Commons, against the open and secret abettors of rebellion, they were determined steadily to oppose any attempt that might be made to surrender the free legislation of that kingdom by uniting with the legislature of Great Britain.” The next day, at a numerous and respectable meeting of the bankers and merchants of Dublin, the Lord Mayor in the chair, resolutions of equal strength against the union, were proposed and adopted. The alarm, in short, became general, and parochial meetings were convened to express disapprobation of a measure, which seemed to be an object of universal dread. The Fellows of Trinity College, and such of the students as were qualified to vote at elections, joined in a request to their representatives that they would oppose the union.

This opposition was naturally to be expected



on a question peculiarly calculated to affect the passions and prejudices of many, and to rouse that laudable pride which the patriot feels in the dignity and honour of his country. It was a question, in which the most honest, upright, and enlightened men might reasonably differ without subjecting themselves to the imputation of improper motives. If an Irishman felt the independence of his country to be shaken, her rank in the scale of nations to be lowered, or her character to be injured, by an union with Great Britain, he had not only a right to oppose it, but it was his duty to exercise that right, if, after a patient and attentive examination of every argument in favour of the measure, he should find no reason to change his original opinion.

In the midst of the ferment thus excited, the Parliament of Ireland met, on the 22d of Jan. 1799. The Viceroy, in his speech, observed, that a spirit of disaffection still prevailed in many parts of Ireland; that the agents of the enemy were active in raising an expectation of fresh assistance from France, for the purpose of separating that kingdom from Great Britain, which must have engaged their particular attention; and that his Majesty had commanded him to express his anxious hope, that this consideration, joined to the sentiment of mutual affection



and common interest, would dispose the Parliaments in both kingdoms to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving the connection essential to their common security, and of consolidating, as far as possible, into one firm and lasting fabric, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British empire.

The address was moved by the Earl of Glandore, who took a brief view of the advantages which would result from an union of the two countries, and earnestly recommending the adoption of that measure; and an amendment moved by Lord Powerscourt, in which the recommendation was omitted, was negatived without a division. In the House of Commons, however, the ministerial project experienced a different reception. The address was there moved by Lord Tyrone, and the amendment, having the same object as that moved in the Lords, was rejected only by one solitary voice. This trifling majority was justly considered by the enemies to the union as a victory gained over its friends, and, as such, it was celebrated in the metropolis, and its vicinity, with various demonstrations of joy. When the address was reported from the Committee appointed to prepare it, Sir Laurence Parsons moved, that the following words in the address,



"That the House would take into their consideration the principle of consolidating, as far as possible, into one firm and lasting fabric, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British empire," should be expunged. Upon this motion a long debate took place, which lasted till six in the morning, when it was carried by one hundred and nine votes, against one hundred and four. Lord Castlereagh then told the House that he had brought forward this measure in compliance with the duties of his station, and with no other view than the mutual advantages of both countries, and the general strength, welfare, and prosperity of the empire; however, those gentlemen who had thought proper to oppose the measure, without so much as examining a tittle of its purport, or any of its arrangements, would recollect, that when the day should come when that House would feel the necessity of its adoption, upon their own heads would fall the responsibility for rejecting a measure of such high importance to the tranquillity and solid happiness of their country.

The exultation of the Anti-Unionists now rose to a very high pitch; the friends and advocates of the measure were not merely reviled in paragraphs and pamphlets, but were exposed to more practical insults, in their passage to and



from the House. The Commons, after these discussions, adjourned their sittings to the 7th of February.

This defeat, however, did not deter Mr. Pitt from the execution of his intention to unfold the principle and object of his plan to Parliament, and to the public. Accordingly, on the day appointed for the further consideration of the question, in the British House of Commons, the last day of January, he opened the subject by expressing his disappointment at what had recently passed in the sister kingdom. He knew, and he acknowledged, that the Parliament of Ireland possessed the power, the entire competence, on the behalf of that country, alike to accept or reject a proposition of this nature. He saw that, at the present moment, one House of Parliament in Ireland, had expressed a repugnance even to the consideration of the measure. And he expressed his deep regret that a plan, fraught with so many advantages, to Ireland in particular, should have been so received, before even its nature could be known. But, with his feelings on the subject, with his knowledge of the undoubted rights of the Irish legislature, he should never speak of its determination in any other terms but those of respect. But he felt, also, that, as a member of the British Parliament, he had a right to



exercise, and a duty to perform. That duty was to express, as distinctly as he could, the general nature and outline of his plan, which, in his conscience, he thought would tend, in the strongest manner, to ensure the safety and the happiness of both kingdoms.

While he felt, therefore, that, so long as the House of Commons of Ireland viewed the subject in the light in which they now viewed it, there was no chance for its adoption, he did not think that, on that account, he ought to abstain from submitting it to the consideration of the British Parliament; on the contrary, he deemed it the more necessary to explain distinctly the principles of the measure, and to state the grounds upon which it appeared to him to be entitled to the approbation of the legislature. If Parliament, upon a full knowledge of the plan, and upon a fair explanation of its nature and tendency, should be of opinion, with him, that it was founded upon fair, just, and equitable principles, calculated to produce mutual advantages to the two kingdoms, he should then propose, that their determination should remain recorded, as that by which the Parliament of Great Britain were ready to abide, leaving to the legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt it thereafter, upon a full consideration of the subject.



There was no man who would deny, that, in a great question of this nature, involving in it objects which, in the first instance, were more likely to be decided upon by passion than by judgment; in a question in which an honest, but a mistaken, sense of national pride was so likely to operate, much misconstruction and misconception must inevitably happen. It therefore became the more necessary, that the intentions of the government which proposed the measure, and the principles of the measure itself, should be distinctly understood. But, in stating that intention, and those principles, Mr. Pitt professed to have something more in view than a mere vindication of government for having proposed the measure. He entertained a confidence, even under the apparent discouragement of the opinion expressed by the Irish House of Commons, that the measure was founded upon such clear, such demonstrable, grounds of utility, was so well calculated to add to the strength and power of the empire, (in which the safety of Ireland was included, and from which it never could be separated) and was attended with so many advantages to Ireland in particular, that all that could be necessary for its ultimate adoption was, that it should be stated distinctly, temperately, and fully, and that it should be left to the unprejudiced, the dispas-



sionate, and the sober judgment of the Parliament of Ireland. He wished, that those whose interests were involved in the measure, should have time for consideration; he wished that time should be given to the landed, to the mercantile, and to the manufacturing interest; that they should look at it in all its bearings, and that they should coolly examine, and sift the popular arguments by which it had been opposed, and that then they should give their deliberative and final judgment.

He was the more encouraged to hope for the ultimate success of the measure, when he saw, notwithstanding all the prejudices which it had excited, that barely more than one-half of the members of the House of Commons were adverse to it; and that, in the other House of Parliament in Ireland, containing, as it did, so large a proportion of the property of that kingdom, it was approved by a great majority. When he had reason to believe that the sentiments of a considerable portion of the people of that country were favourable to it, and that much of the manufacturing, and of the commercial, interest of Ireland were already sensible how much it was calculated to promote their advantage; he thought, when it came to be more deliberately examined, and when it was seen in what temper it was here proposed and



discussed, that it would still terminate in that which could alone be a fortunate result. It would be vain, indeed, to hope, that a proposition on which prejudices were so likely to operate, and which was so liable to misconception, should be unanimously approved. But the approbation for which he hoped, was that of the Irish Parliament, and that of the intelligent part of the Irish public. It was with a view to that object that he thought it his duty to bring the measure forward at present; not for the sake of urging its immediate adoption, but that it might be known and recorded. It was not necessary for this purpose to enter into any thing more than such a general statement of the nature of the plan as would enable the House to form a correct judgment of it.

As to the general principle upon which the whole of the measure in contemplation was founded, Mr. Pitt was happy to observe, from what had recently passed, that there was not a probability of any difference of opinion. This principle, to which both sides of the House had expressed their assent, was, that a perpetual connection between Great Britain and Ireland was essential to the interests of both. He did not wish merely for the maintenance of that connection, as tending to add to the general



strength of the empire, but he wished for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that could give to Ireland its due weight and importance, as a great member of the empire. He wished for it with a view of giving to that country the means of improving all its great natural resources, and of giving it a full participation of all those blessings which this country so eminently enjoyed. The discussion of this subject was now called for by the attack which had been made by foreign enemies and domestic traitors on that very connection, the necessity of which had been admitted on all hands. The dissolution of that connection was the great object of the hostility of the common enemies of both countries; it was almost the only remaining hope with which they now continued the contest. Baffled and defeated, as they had hitherto been, they still retained the hope, they were still meditating attempts, to dissolve that connection. They had shewn that they thought this the vulnerable point in which England might be most successfully attacked; and it was our business to derive advantage from the hostility of our enemies; to profit by the designs of those who, if their conduct displayed no true wisdom, at least possessed, in an eminent degree, that spe-



cies of wisdom which was calculated for the promotion of mischief. They knew upon what footing the connection between the two countries rested, and they felt the most ardent hope, that the two Parliaments would be infatuated enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that connection upon a more solid basis.

These circumstances alone ought, in the opinion of Mr. Pitt, to induce the House deliberately, and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which was but too apparent. It required but a moment's reflection, for any man who had marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of their connection. It was evidently one which did not afford that security which, even in times less dangerous and critical than the present, would have been necessary to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and its resources.

Mr. Pitt again entered upon a view of the act of 1782, in order to prove that it was not considered as a *final adjustment*, but that it was in the contemplation of the administration of that day, to pursue a line of conduct conformable to the part of the address which prayed his Majesty to take such further measures as to him



seemed proper, to strengthen the connection between the two countries. The answer from the King stated, that, in compliance with the address, he would immediately take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose; and this answer was delivered to the House, by Mr. Fox himself, who was then Secretary of State. Mr. Pitt asserted, without the least fear of contradiction from any member whatever, that it was in the contemplation of the government of that day to adopt some measures of the nature alluded to in the address;—since that period, however, no such measure had been taken. He also maintained, that the very system which, by those very Ministers who brought it forward, was found to be imperfect, even for the purpose of maintaining the connection between the two countries, remained, at that moment, in the same imperfect state. It left the two countries with separate and independent legislatures, connected only by this tie, that the Executive Government in both was the same,—that the Crown exercised its power of assenting to Irish Acts of Parliament, under the great seal of Great Britain, and by the advice of British Ministers. Whether this was a sufficient tie to unite them in time of peace;—whether, in time of war, it was sufficient to consolidate their strength against a common



enemy ;—whether it was sufficient to guard against those local jealousies which must necessarily, sometimes, exist between countries so connected ;—whether it was calculated to afford to Ireland all the important, commercial, and political, advantages which she would derive from a closer connection with Great Britain ;—whether it could give to both nations that degree of strength and prosperity, which must be the result of an union, needed only be stated to be decided.

Mr. Pitt referred to the commercial propositions in order to avail himself of an opinion advanced, on that occasion, by Mr. Foster, who was then Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, and who was now Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, where he had given his vote against the measure of an union. Mr. Foster then told the Irish Parliament :—“ If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain.” Here he was happily mistaken ; Ireland had again the offer of the same advantages, but more complete, and, in all respects, better calculated to attain their object ; and this offer Mr. Foster had exerted all his influence to reject. But he had farther said, “ *things cannot remain as they are*,—commercial jealousy is roused,—it will increase with *two independent Legislatures* ;—and



without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial Empire, political union will receive many shocks, and *separation of interest* must threaten *separation of connection*, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at, as a possible event."

These expressions were not quoted, by Mr. Pitt, as pledges given by Mr. Foster, that he would support a proposal for an union between the two countries; but to prove, that the situation of the two countries, after the *final* adjustment of 1782, was such, in his opinion, as led to the danger of a separation between them. What was the evil to which Mr. Foster alluded?—Commercial jealousies between two countries, acting upon the laws of two independent legislatures, and the danger of these legislatures acting in opposition to each other.—How could this evil be remedied? By two means only; either by some compact entered into by the legislatures of the two countries respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations, or else, by blending the two legislatures together; these were the only two means; and Mr. Pitt defied the wit of man to point out a third. The mode of compact was proposed in 1785; but, unfortunately, in spite of Mr. Foster's eloquence and authority, who then stated the importance of guarding against



the evil, it so happened, that doctrines, derived chiefly from this side of the water, succeeded in convincing the Parliament of Ireland, that it would be inconsistent with their independence to enter into any compact whatever. Mr. Foster then asserted, that the unsettled state in which the matter was left, would give "Political Union many shocks, and lead to a separation of connection." This remedy having thus failed, no other now remained, than that of—*a Legislative Union*.

Mr. Pitt used many other arguments, and put several other cases, in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of the settlement of 1782, to produce a cordial harmony between the sister kingdoms, and the bad consequences resulting from the want of such harmony; and he then proceeded to a statement of the circumstances which peculiarly called upon the Parliament, at that moment, to remedy the existing imperfection. The country was then engaged in the most important and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the history of the world;—a conflict in which Great Britain was distinguished, for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilized society. She saw the point in which that enemy thought her the most assailable. Were not the Parliament then, bound,



in policy and prudence, to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved, as the nation was, in a contest of liberty against despotism, of property against plunder and rapine, of religion and order against impiety and anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience had taught the people to feel, that it was only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French principles and French arms) which were every day attested by the wounds of the bleeding world.

Was there a man who did not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, might augment the strength of the empire, and thereby ensure its safety? Would not that benefit to Ireland be, of itself, so solid, so inestimable, that, in comparison with it, all commercial interests, and the preservation of local habits and manners, would be trifling, even were they to be endangered by an Union, which they undoubtedly would not be? The people of Ireland, Mr. Pitt believed, were proud of being associated with the English in the contest in which they were engaged, and must feel the advantage of augmenting the general force of the empire. That an Union was calculated to produce that effect, he



thought was a proposition which could not be disputed. There was not in any court of Europe a statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the power of the empire would be increased, to a very great extent indeed, by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. The same language had been held by every writer of any information on the subject, in the course of the century. If the ministers of our allies were to be asked, what measure they thought most likely to augment the power of the British empire, and consequently to increase that strength by which they were now protected; if the agent of our enemies were to be asked, what measure would be most likely to render their designs abortive, the answer would be the same in both cases, namely, the firm consolidation of every part of the empire.

There was another consideration well worth attention. What were the peculiar means by which we had been enabled to resist the unequalled, and eccentric, efforts of France, without any diminution, nay, with an increase, of our general prosperity?—What, but the great commercial resources which we possessed? A measure, then, which must communicate to such a mighty limb of the empire as Ireland all the commercial advantages which Great



Britain enjoyed, which would open the markets of the one country to the other, which would give them both the common use of their capitals, must, by diffusing a large portion of wealth over Ireland, considerably increase the resources, and consequently the strength, of the whole empire.

But it was not merely in this general view that Mr. Pitt thought the question ought to be considered. It ought to be looked to with a view peculiarly to the permanent interest and security of Ireland. When that country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by enemies without, and of treason within, from what quarter did she derive the means of her deliverance?—From the naval force of Great Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her military of every description, not called for by law—and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the inhabitants of Ireland itself, of which it was impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shewed how well they deserved to be called the brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps, have ultimately succeeded in repelling the dangers by which they were threatened, but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Were it certain, that the same



ready and effectual assistance, which we had happily afforded on that occasion, would be always equally within our power? Great Britain had always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that common interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the common enemy made her attack upon Great Britain through the medium of Ireland; and when their attack upon Ireland went to deprive her of her connection with Great Britain, and to substitute in its stead the new government of the French Republic. When that danger threatened Ireland, the purse of Great Britain was as open for the wants of Ireland as for the necessities of England.

These circumstances were stated by Mr. Pitt, not to upbraid Ireland for the benefits which England had conferred, but only to shew the friendship and good-will with which this country had acted towards her. But if struggles of this sort might and must return again,—if the worst dangers were those which were yet to come, dangers which might be greater from being more disguised,—if these situations might arise when the same means of relief were not in our power, what was the remedy which reason and policy pointed out? It was to identify them with us; it was to make them a part of the same community, by giving them a



full share of those accumulated blessings which were diffused throughout Great Britain; it was, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the wealth, the power, and the stability of the British empire. If, then, the measure came recommended, not only by the obvious defects of the system which then existed, but that it had also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the empire, and of guarding against future danger from the common enemy, it was next to be considered in its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

Mr. Pitt was perfectly aware, that, so long as Ireland was separated from Great Britain, any attempt on our part to provide measures which might be thought salutary, as respecting questions of contending sects or parties, of the claimed rights of the Catholics, or of the precautions necessary for the security of the Protestants;—all these, though they might have been brought forward by the very persons who were the advocates of the final adjustment of 1782, were, in fact, attacks upon the independence of the Irish Parliament, and attempts to usurp the right of deciding on points which could only be brought within the province of the British Parliament by compact. Until the kingdoms were united, any attempt



to make regulations here for the internal state of Ireland must certainly be a violation of her independence. But, feeling as he did for the interests and the welfare of the Irish, he could not be inattentive to passing events; he must, therefore, repeat, that whoever looked at the circumstances to which he had alluded,—whoever considered that the enemy had shewn by their conduct that they considered Ireland as the weakest and most assailable part of the empire,—whoever had reflected upon those dreadful and inexcusable cruelties, instigated by the enemies of both countries, and upon those lamentable severities with which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which was itself one great aggravation of the crimes and treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stood composed, in the hostile division of its sects, in the animosities existing between ancient settlers and original inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of civilization which marked that country more than almost any other country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which had produced that distressed state which they now deplored;—every one, who reflected upon all these cir-



cumstances, must agree with him, in thinking that there was no cure but in the formation of a general Imperial Legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, uninfluenced by the prejudices, and uninflamed by the passions, of that distracted country.

Among the great and known defects of Ireland, as Mr. Pitt had observed, in the first debate upon the subject, one of the most prominent features was, its want of industry and of capital; and how were those wants to be supplied, but by blending more closely with Ireland the industry and capital of this country? But, above all, what was their situation, in respect of the great religious distinctions between the people of Ireland? The Protestant felt that the claims of the Catholics threatened the existence of the Protestant ascendancy; while, on the other hand, the great body of Catholics felt the establishment of the National Church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, a grievance. Between the two it became a matter of difficulty, in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

Mr. Pitt was well aware that the subject of religious distinction was a dangerous and deli-



cate topic, especially when applied to such a country as Ireland, the situation of which, in this respect, was different from that of any other country. Where the established religion of the State was the same as the general religion of the empire, and where the property of the country was in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion, it was not easy to say, on general principles, what system of Church Establishment, in such a country, would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many, he knew, it would be contended, that the religion professed by the majority of the people would, at least, be entitled to an equality of privileges. He had heard such an argument used in the British House of Commons; but those who applied it, without qualification, to the case of Ireland, forgot the principles on which English interest and English connection had been established in that country, and on which its present legislature was formed. No man could say, that, in the actual state of things, while Ireland remained a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics, without endangering the State, and shaking the constitution of Ireland to its centre.



On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late it might be fit to discuss it, two propositions were indisputable; first, when the conduct of the Catholics should be such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times should be favourable to such a measure,—when those events should take place, it was obvious, that such a question might be agitated in an united, imperial, Parliament, with much greater safety than it could be in a separate legislature. In the second place, he thought it certain that, even for whatever period it might be deemed necessary, after the Union, to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which arose out of their present situation would be removed, if the Protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.

How far, in addition to this great and leading consideration, it might also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some



mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of tithes, which, in many instances, operated, at present, as a great practical evil;\* or to make, under proper regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the existing Protestant establishment, an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic clergy, it was not then necessary to discuss. It was not sufficient to observe, that these, and all other subordinate points, connected with the same subject, were more likely to be permanently and satisfactorily settled by an united legislature, than by any local arrangements. On these grounds, he contended that, with a view to providing an effectual remedy for the distractions which had unhappily prevailed in Ireland, with a view of removing those causes which had endangered, and which still endangered, its security;—the measures

\* I am unable to conceive on what grounds Mr. Pitt founded his notions respecting the oppressive operation of tithes on the tenantry of Ireland, nor have I been able to discover any cause for questioning the validity of the reasons assigned, in a former volume, for the belief that the abolition of tithes would afford not the smallest relief to the farmer or the peasant; confirmed, as they are, by the recorded opinions of the most able and intelligent leaders of the rebellion, who decidedly stated, that such a measure would only increase the wealth of the land-owner, and that the tenant would have still more to pay for land tithe free, than he actually paid while tithes were payable to the Clergy.



which he meant to propose promised to be more effectual than any other which could be devised; and, on these grounds alone, if there existed no other, he should feel it his duty to submit them to the House.

But, besides what related most immediately to the great object of healing the dissensions, and providing for the internal tranquillity, of Ireland, there were other objects, which, though comparatively with that of inferior importance, were yet in themselves highly material; and, in a secondary view, well worthy of attention. It had been asked what positive advantages would Ireland derive from an Union? Mr. Pitt presumed that the considerations which he had already urged would be regarded as a sufficient answer to that question. But, in fact, it was to be considered in another point of view, when it would be found to bear some resemblance to a question which had been repeatedly put, during the six preceding years, by the leading members of Opposition. What were the advantages which Great Britain had gained by the present war with France?

To this, the brilliant successes of the British arms by sea and land, our unexampled naval victories over all our enemies, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the progressive extension



of our commerce, and a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history, afforded at once an ample and a satisfactory answer. But there was another general answer, which had been uniformly given, and which would alone be sufficient; it was, that we did not enter into the war for any purpose of ambition; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve; and, in that sense, what we had gained by the war was, in one word, ALL that we should have lost without it; it was the preservation of our constitution, our independence, our honour, our existence, as a nation.

In the same manner the question with respect to Ireland might be answered; the general advantages might be enumerated which Ireland would derive from the effects of the arrangement to which reference had been made; the protection which she would secure to herself in the hour of danger; the most effectual means of increasing her commerce, and improving her agriculture, the command of English capital, the infusion of English manners and English industry, necessarily tending to meliorate her condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilization, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distracted the country, and which she did not possess, within herself, the power either to controul or to extinguish. She



would see the avenue to honours, to distinctions, and to exalted situations in the general seat of empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enabled them to indulge an honourable and laudable ambition.

But, independent of all these positive advantages, it might also be answered, that the question was not what Ireland was to gain, but what she was to preserve ; not merely how she might best improve her situation, but how she was to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gained was the preservation of all those blessings arising from the British constitution, and which were inseparable from her connection with Great Britain ; those blessings, of which it had long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, to deprive her, and, on their ruins, to establish, (with all its attendant miseries and horrors) a Jacobin Republic, founded on French influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.

Such would be the answer, if the attention were directed only to the question of general advantage ; and the answer would be full and sufficient ; but as it had been more particularly and pointedly asked, what commercial and manufacturing advantages would result to Ireland from the Union, Mr. Pitt deemed it necessary to satisfy the House on those points. And, in this part



of his argument, he quoted several passages, from a speech of Mr. Foster, on the commercial propositions, in 1785, whose authority, (as he was an enemy to the Union) he justly conceived would have more weight with the Opposition than his own. Speaking of a solid and unalterable compact between the two countries, speaking expressly of the peculiar importance of insuring the continuance of those commercial benefits, which Ireland, at that time, held only at the discretion of this country, he said, "The exportation of Irish products to England, amounts to two millions and a half annually; and the exportation of British products to Ireland amounts to but one million." Mr. Foster then proceeds to reason upon the advantage which Ireland would derive, under such circumstances, from guarding against mutual prohibition; and he accompanied the statement just quoted, with this observation:—"If, indeed, the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it; but, as it for ever confirmed all the advantages we derive from our linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it, surely, gentlemen who regard that trade, and *whose fortunes and rents depend on its prosperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.*"



Such was the reasoning of the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer of that day, which Mr. Pitt considered to have been perfectly just. With respect to his late opinions, Mr. Pitt did not think he could more forcibly reply to a person who signed his name to propositions which declared, that *the ruin of the linen trade of Ireland was likely to be the consequence of an Union*, than by opposing to him his own opinion. That opinion he should be able to strengthen by stating, that the progress which had been made in commercial advantages to Ireland, since 1785, had been such as to render his argument still more applicable. What was the nature of that commerce explained by the same person in so concise and forcible a manner, that Mr. Pitt was happy to use his own statement; " Britain," says Mr. Foster, " imports annually from us, two million five hundred thousand pounds of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about a million of her's, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops, which we cannot grow; coals, which we cannot raise; tin, which we have not; and bark, which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving any duty."



In the same manner Mr. Foster's speech pointed out the advantages of the commercial propositions, then under consideration, as the ground-work of a compact between the two countries, in 1785, on commercial subjects.— But the trade was now infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. Mr. Pitt produced documents to prove that the manufactures exported to Ireland from Great Britain, in 1797, very little exceeded a million sterling, (the articles of produce amounted to nearly the same sum,) while Great Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near three millions in the manufactured articles of linen and linen-yarn, and between two or three millions in provisions and cattle, besides corn, and other articles of produce.

There were other circumstances advantageous to Ireland,—articles which were essential to her trade, and to her subsistence, or which served as new materials for her manufactures, were sent from England free from duty; while all that England took back from Ireland was liable to an export-duty in that country; the increasing produce of the chief article of Irish manufacture, and four-fifths of the whole export-trade of Ireland, were to be ascribed not to that *Independent Legislature*, but to the liberality of the British Parliament.



It was by the free admission of linens for our market, and the bounties granted by Parliament on its re-export, that the linen-trade had been brought to the height to which it had now attained. To the Parliament of England, then, was it owing, that a market had been opened for the staple manufacture of Ireland, to the amount of three millions annually. By the bounty which we gave to Ireland we afforded her a double market for her linen, and (which was still more striking and important) we had prevented a competition against her, arising from the superior cheapness of the linen manufactures of the Continent, by subjecting their importation to a duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly shew what would be the danger to Ireland from the competition in all its principal branches of the linen trade, than the simple fact, that we, even then, imported foreign linen under that heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland was able to send us, with the preference already stated. By this arrangement alone, therefore, we must be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds per annum in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty on all linens, Irish as well as foreign; or, on the other hand, as sacrificing, perhaps, at



least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles, by the subjects of this country, which might be saved, if we allowed the importation of all linen, foreign as well as Irish, equally free from duty.

The proposed Union, however, was, in its effects, calculated not merely to confirm, but to extend, the advantages which Mr. Foster had so strongly insisted on. It was obvious, indeed, that a more full and perfect connection between the two countries, from whatever cause it might arise, must produce a greater facility and freedom of commercial intercourse, and ultimately tend to the benefit of both. The advantages to be derived to either country, from such an arrangement, must, indeed, in a great measure, be gradual; but they were not, on that account, the less certain; and here Mr. Pitt had again recourse to Mr. Foster's speech for a correct delineation of them.

“Gentlemen,—undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures. I agree with them that it may not operate soon; but we are to look forward to a final settlement, and it is impossible but that, in time, with as good a climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its



natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by bounties, jealousies, or legislative interference, from its natural and beneficial course. This system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining part of the empire, by encouraging the communications of markets among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers."

Mr. Pitt justly conceived himself to be effectually sheltered from any imputation of presumption, in hazarding doubtful opinions, upon such a subject, after he had so fortified himself with the arguments of a most competent judge, who, when he delivered these sentiments, judged dispassionately. He reminded the House that, for the commercial advantages which Ireland enjoyed, she was solely indebted to the liberal policy of Great Britain. Nor was he afraid of rousing the jealousy of British manufacturers, by a fair statement of these advantages. The interests of the two countries were the same; and the property of one was the property of the other.



If ever, indeed, he should have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shou'd be at an end, we should, at least, have the consolation of knowing, that it would not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which would have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great Britain. If ever the over-bearing power of prejudice and passion should produce that fatal consequence, it would too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland then enjoyed, and which were continually increasing, were to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care, of the British empire, extended to the sister kingdom, as to a part of ourselves, and not (as had, fallaciously, and vainly, been pretended) to any thing which had been done, or could be done, by the independent power of her own separate legislature.

Having thus stated, fully and perspicuously, his reasons for thinking an Union adviseable, for wishing it to be proposed to the Parliament of Ireland, with temper and fairness; and for considering it as entitled, at least, to a calm and



dispassionate discussion in that kingdom; he proceeded to answer some objections which he admitted to be plausible, and which he knew to have had great influence with the Irish Parliament.

The first objection to which he turned his attention was that advanced by Mr. Sheridan, who had insisted on the incompetency of the Irish Parliament to conclude an Union; a question to which Mr. Pitt had briefly adverted, on the first discussion of the subject in the House. But, as it involved a great constitutional point, a question of fundamental importance, he now deemed it necessary to consider it more at large. Mr. Pitt insisted on the competency of the Parliament of Ireland (representing, as it did, in the language of our constitution, "*lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm*") to make laws to bind that people; and this, he thought, must be admitted, unless Mr. Sheridan was disposed to distinguish that Parliament from the Parliament of Great Britain, and, while he maintained the independence of the Irish legislature, yet denied to it the lawful and essential powers of Parliament. No man, who asserted the parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, could deny its competency on this question, unless he meant to go the length of denying, at the same moment,



the whole of the authority of the Parliament of Great Britain—to shake every principle of legislation, and to maintain, that all the acts passed, and every thing done, by Parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, was neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the Union between Scotland and England, but he must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the united legislature since the Union; nay, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which the House then sat and deliberated, as a House of Parliament. Of course, he must deny the validity of the adjustment of 1782, and call in question every measure which he had himself been the most forward to have enforced.

If this principle of the incompetency of Parliament to the decision of the measure were admitted, or if it were contended, that Parliament had no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, the House would be driven to the necessity of recognizing a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilized State. Mr. Pitt meant the principle, that Parliament could not adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and dele-



gating authority, for directions. If that doctrine were true, to what an extent would it carry the legislature. If such an argument could be set up and maintained, the Parliament acted without any legitimate authority when they created the representation of the principality of Wales, or of either of the counties palatine of England. Every law that Parliament ever made, without such appeal, either as to its own frame and constitution, as to the qualification of the electors and of the elected, or as to the great and fundamental point of the succession to the Crown, was a breach of treaty, and an act of usurpation.

What was to be thought of the power of the Irish Parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its Protestant constituents, associated to itself the Catholic electors, and thus destroyed the fundamental distinction on which it was formed? Mr. Pitt deprecated the idea of objecting to, or of blaming, any of these measures; he only stated the extent to which the principle, that the Parliament had no authority to decide on the Union, would lead; and, if it were admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Would any man say, that, although a Protestant Parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by Protestant constituents, had, by its own inherent power, and without



consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the Catholics, who were, till then, in fact, a separate community, that Parliament cannot associate itself with another Protestant community, represented by a Protestant Parliament, having one intent with itself, and similar in its laws, its constitution, and its established religion? What must be said by those who had, at any time, been friends to any plan of Parliamentary Reform, and particularly to such as had been, most recently, brought forward, either in Great Britain or in Ireland? Whatever might have been, by some, thought of the propriety of the measure, no one had ever expressed a doubt of the competency of Parliament to entertain and discuss it. Yet no man could maintain the principle of those plans, without contending that, as a member of Parliament, he possessed a right to concur in the disfranchisement of those who had sent him to Parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. No sufficient distinction, in point of principle, could be maintained for a moment; and Mr. Pitt declared that he should not have dwelt so long, and so earnestly, upon the subject, were he not convinced, that it was connected, in part, with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of government, which had lately



become too prevalent in the world. It might, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rested on the supposition that there existed continually, in every government, a sovereignty *in abeyance*, as it were, on the part of the people, ready to be called forth on every occasion; or, rather, on every pretence, when it might suit the purposes of the party or faction, who were the advocates of that doctrine, to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It was in those false principles that were contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which, in the present day, had spread themselves over so large a proportion of the habitable world.

These principles were, at length, so well known, and so well understood, in their practical effects, that they could no longer hope for one enlightened and intelligent advocate, when they appeared in their true colours. Yet, with all the horror that was felt at the effect of them, with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which was felt towards the constitution of the country, founded as it was both in theory and experience, on principles directly the reverse, there were some persons who, while they abhorred and rejected such opinions, when presented to them in their naked



deformity, suffered them, in a more disguised shape, to be infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison was now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument, or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever might be its particular form, could long subsist if this principle were once admitted. In every government there must reside, somewhere, a supreme, absolute, and unlimited, authority. This was equally true of every lawful monarchy — of every aristocracy — of every pure democracy — (if, indeed, such a form of government ever had existed, or ever could exist) and of those mixed constitutions, formed and compounded from the others, which Englishmen were justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these governments, indeed alike, that power might by possibility be abused; but whether the abuse was such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or, more properly speaking, of any portion of them, must always be an extreme case, and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility; not in law only, but in conscience and in duty, to all those who either acted upon it themselves, or persuaded others



to do so. But no provision for such a case ever had been, or ever could be, made beforehand; it formed no chapter in any known code of laws; it could find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. But, above all, if such a principle could make no part of any established constitution, not even of those where the government was so framed as to be most liable to an abuse of its powers, it would be preposterous indeed, to suppose that it could be admitted in one where those powers were so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Should that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best government, which could not be permitted to exist as an established check, even upon the worst? Pregnant as it was with danger and confusion, should it be received and authorized in proportion as every reason, which could ever make it necessary to recur to it, was not likely to exist? Yet, strange to say, in proportion as we were less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy, in proportion as a government was so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means of preventing or correcting every abuse of power, and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due



attention to the interest and feelings of every part of the community, in that very proportion persons had been found perverse enough to imagine, that such a constitution admitted and recognized, as a part of it; that which was inconsistent with the nature of any government, and, above all, inapplicable to our own.

Mr. Pitt would not have felt it necessary to say so much upon the subject, if he had not been sensible that this false and dangerous mockery of the *Sovereignty of the People* was, in truth, one of the chief elements of Jacobinism, one of the favourite impostures to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who had not the opportunity of examining and exposing it; and that, as such, on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appeared, it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.

The next, and not the least prevalent, objection to the union, was one which was contained in words which were an appeal to a natural and laudable, but, in Mr. Pitt's estimation, an erroneous and mistaken sense, of national pride. It was an appeal to the generous and noble passions of a nation, easily inflamed by any supposed attack upon its honour;



—Mr. Pitt meant the attempt to represent the question of an union, by compact between the Parliaments of the two kingdoms, as a question involving the independence of Ireland. It had been said, that no compensation could be made to any country for the surrender of its national independence. On that, as on every part of this momentous question, Mr. Pitt expressed his earnest desire, that the House should come closely to the point, that they should sift it to the bottom, and ascertain upon what grounds and principles their opinion really rested. Did they mean, he asked, to maintain that, in any humiliating, any degrading, sense of the word, which could be acted upon practically as a rule, and which could lead to any useful conclusion, at any time when the governments of any two separate countries united in forming one more extensive empire, the individuals who composed either of the former narrow societies were afterwards less members of an independent country, or, to any valuable and useful purpose, less possessed of political freedom or of civil happiness, than they were before? It must be obvious, he contended, to every one who looked at the subject, in tracing the histories of all the countries the most proud of their present existing independence, of all the nations in Europe, there was not one that could exist in the state in



which it then stood, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to that hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one kingdom; but would any man, in general, assert, that, in all the different unions which had formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants had become less free, that they had less of which to be proud, less scope for their own exertions, than they had in their former situations? If this doctrine were to obtain general currency, what would be the actual situation of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independent Parliament of that kingdom? If the principle were pushed to its full extent, it was obviously incompatible with all civil society. As the former principle of the sovereignty of the people struck at the foundation of all governments, so was this equally hostile to all political confederacy, and mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

But while he combated this general and abstract principle, which would operate as a



radical objection to every union between separate states, Mr. Pitt took care to observe that he did not mean to contend that there was, in no case, just ground for such a sentiment. So far from entertaining any such opinion, he admitted that it might become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people to resist an union. If there existed a country which contained within itself the means of military protection, the naval force necessary for its defence, which furnished objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to maintaining, with dignity, the rank which it had attained among the nations of the world; if, above all, it enjoyed the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possessed a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any there were, it had within itself the means of correcting; and if that constitution were equal, if not superior, to that of any other in the world, or, (which was nearly the same thing) if those who lived under it believed it to be so, and fondly cherished that opinion, he could indeed well understand that such a country must be jealous of any measure which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, was to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.



But if, on the other hand, it should happen that there was a country which, against the greatest of all dangers, that threatened its peace and security, had not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation; if that other were a neighbouring and a kindred nation, speaking the same language, having laws, customs, and habits, the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth; the stability of whose government, the excellence of whose constitution, was, more than ever, the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very country in question could only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance; under such circumstances, he would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every rational principle of dignity, of honour, or of interest? Was not this a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to an Union? Was not Great Britain precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a country, situated as Ireland was, would desire to unite? Did an union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke? Was it not rather a free and voluntary association of



two great countries, which joined, for their common benefit, in one empire, where each would retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which wanted nothing but that indissoluble connection to render both invincible?

*Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo*

*Nec nova regna peto ; paribus se legibus ambæ*

*Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant.*

It had been urged, as another objection to the Union, that it would necessarily increase one of the evils of which Ireland had to complain, the want of a sufficient population, by augmenting the number of absentees. Mr. Pitt admitted that this would be the case to a limited extent, during a part of the year; but he contended that such a disadvantage would be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

If it were true that the measure had a direct tendency to admit the introduction of that British capital into Ireland, which was most likely to give life to all the operations of commerce, and to all the improvements of agriculture; it were that which, above all other considerations, was best calculated to give security,



quiet, and internal repose to that country ; if it were likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and of civilization, by a more intimate intercourse with England ; if it were more likely to communicate from hence those habits which distinguished this country, and which, by a continued gradation, united the highest and the lowest orders of the community, without a chasm in any part of the social system ; if it were likely to open to commerce new markets, and fresh resources of wealth and industry ;—could wealth, could industry, could civilization, increase among the whole bulk of the people without much more than counterbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of legislation? If, notwithstanding the absence of Parliament from Dublin, it would still remain the centre of education, and of the internal commerce of a country increasing in improvement ; if it would still remain the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation, could it be supposed, with a view even to the interests of those to whose partial interests a most successful appeal had been made ; with a view either to the respectable body of the bar, to the merchant, or shopkeeper of Dublin, (if it were



possible to suppose that such a transaction ought to be referred to that single criterion) that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general advantage of the State. It should be remembered also, that, if the transfer of the seat of legislation might call from Ireland to England the members of the United Parliament, yet, after the Union, property, influence, and consideration in Ireland would lead, as much as in Great Britain, to all the objects of imperial ambition; and there must, consequently, exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that country, and to those who possessed it, to reside there, and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they lived, and to extend and improve their influence and connections.

Fortunately, experience combined with theory to demonstrate the justice and force of this argument. What result had the Union with Scotland produced to that country? An Union which had been as much opposed, and by much the same arguments, prejudices, and misconceptions, as were urged against the present measure; and which had created, too, the same alarms, and provoked the same outrages, as had lately taken place in Dublin. The population of Edinburgh had been more than doubled since the Union, and a new city added to the old.



But it might be objected, that Edinburgh had engrossed all the commerce of that country, and had those advantages which Dublin could not expect. Yet, while Edinburgh, deprived of its parliament, but retaining, as Dublin would retain, its courts of justice; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the resort of those whose circumstances would not permit them to visit a distant metropolis; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the seat of national education, while Edinburgh had baffled all the predictions of that period, what had been the situation of Glasgow? The population of Glasgow, since the Union, had increased in the proportion of between five and six to one; and its progress in manufactures, and the increase of all its general advantages, would suffice to remove those gloomy apprehensions which had been so industriously excited with respect to Ireland.

It had been further contended, that the security of the commercial privileges, which Ireland enjoyed, would be affected by the proposed Union. But, as Mr. Pitt had shewn, these privileges had been falsely imputed to the independence of the Irish Parliament, when, in fact, they were imputable to the exercise of the voluntary discretion of the British Parliament, unbound by compact, prompted only by



its natural disposition, to consider the interests of Ireland the same as its own; and if that had been done while Ireland had been only united to us in the imperfect and precarious manner in which it then was, while it had a separate Parliament, notwithstanding the commercial jealousies of our own manufacturers; if, under these circumstances, England had displayed such a liberal disposition towards her, at a time when Ireland had no share in our representation, what fresh ground could there be for apprehension, when she should have her proportionate weight in the legislature, and should be united with us, as closely as Lancashire or Yorkshire, or any other county in Great Britain?

One other general topic of objection, Mr. Pitt judged it necessary to notice;—the idea had been propagated, most industriously, that the main principle of the measure was to subject Ireland to a load of debt, and an increase of taxes; and to expose her to the consequences of all our alledged difficulties and supposed necessities. He hoped, that the zeal, the spirit, and the liberal and enlarged policy of England, had given ample proof, that it was not from a pecuniary motive that she sought an Union. If it were not desirable on the grounds which had been stated, it could not be recommended



for the mere purpose of taxation. But it was only necessary, in order to quiet any jealous feelings on that subject, to look again to Scotland. Was there any instance in which, with forty-five members on her part, and five hundred and thirteen on our's, she had paid more than her proportion of the general burdens? Was there, then, any ground of apprehension that the British Parliament would tax Ireland more heavily when she became associated with ourselves?—To tax, in its due proportion, the whole of the empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, was the great characteristic of British finance, as equality of laws was of the British Constitution.

But, in addition to this, when the details of the proposition came to be settled, it would be in the power of Parliament to fix, for any number of years which might be thought proper, the proportion by which the contributions of Ireland to the expences of the State should be regulated; that these proportions should not be such as would make a contribution greater than the necessary amount of its own present necessary expences as a separate kingdom,—and, even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution, from time to time, might be made to depend on the comparative



produce, in each kingdom, of such general taxes as might be thought to afford the best criterion of their respective wealth. Or, what Mr. Pitt hoped would be found practicable, the system of internal taxation in each country might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure that Ireland should never be taxed but in proportion as we should tax ourselves.

The application of these principles was left for future discussion; Mr. Pitt only mentioned them as strongly shewing, from the misrepresentation which had taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it was upon the House to receive the proposition to be submitted to it, and to adopt, after close deliberation, such resolutions as might record to Ireland the terms upon which the British Parliament were ready to meet her; and, in the mean time, he should wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment when the effect of reason and discussion might reconcile the minds of men in that kingdom to a measure which, he was sure, would be found as necessary for their peace and happiness, as it would be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British empire.—Mr. Pitt then read the following resolutions to the House.



“ Resolved,—First, That in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective Parliaments of his Majesty’s said kingdoms.

“ Second, That it appears to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose, as the first article to serve as a basis of the said Union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*.

“ Third, That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose, that the succession to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdoms shall continue limited and settled, in the same manner as the Imperial Crown of the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the



terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

“ Fourth, That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose, that the said united kingdoms be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be styled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that such a number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and such a number of the Members of the House of Commons as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament, on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an Act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every Member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom, shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take, and subscribe, the same oaths, and make the same declaration, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made, by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

“ Fifth, That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the Churches of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, disci-



pline, and government, thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

“ Sixth, That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that his Majesty's subjects in Ireland shall, at all times hereafter, be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases in respect to which treaties shall be made by his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, with any foreign power, as his Majesty's subjects in Great Britain; that no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty free; and that on other articles there shall be established for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments; subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles which may, at any time hereafter, be imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that



where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture, of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on Import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed, as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect, and that all other matters in trade and commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the Union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the United Parliament.

“ Seventh, That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that the charge arising from the payment of the interest, or sinking fund for the reduction of the principle, of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively; that, for a number of years to be limited, the future ordinary expences of the United Kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that, after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportions shall not be liable to be varied,



except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

“ Eighth, That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that all laws in force at the time of the Union, and that all the Courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms, shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations, from time to time, as circumstances may appear to the Parliament of the United Kingdom to require.

“ That the foregoing resolutions be laid before his Majesty, with an humble address, assuring his Majesty, that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in his Majesty's most gracious Message.

“ That we entertain a firm persuasion, that a complete and entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce, of the respective kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing,



at all times, an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources, of the empire.

“ Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before his Majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to his Majesty’s wisdom, at such time and in such manner as his Majesty, in his parental solicitude for the happiness of his people, shall judge fit, to communicate these propositions to his Parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as shall be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established, by the deliberate consent of the Parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests, of his Majesty’s faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of his Majesty’s crown, and in the preservation and



advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire."

This luminous speech, in which all the best powers of eloquence were displayed, and which placed the important subject to which it related in the clearest point of view, was answered by Mr. Sheridan; who complimented Mr. Pitt as an orator, but condemned him as a statesman. All the advantages which it was proposed by the Union to confer upon Ireland, ought, in Mr. Sheridan's estimation, to be granted by England without the Union. And, wholly unconvinced by the strong arguments which Mr. Pitt had advanced with so much ability and effect, he considered the free connection of the two countries as a submission to slavery, and an abject surrender of independence, on the part of Ireland. Having adverted to the positive rejection of the plan by the Irish Parliament, he read the following Resolutions :

" That no measures can have a tendency to improve and perpetuate the ties of amity and connection, now existing between Great Britain and Ireland, which have not for their basis the manifest, fair, and free consent and approbation of the Parliaments of the two countries.

" That whoever shall endeavour to obtain the appearance of such consent and approba-



tion in either country, by employing the influence of government for the purposes of corruption or intimidation, is an enemy to his Majesty and the constitution."

Lord Hawkesbury supported the original propositions, which were carried, on a division, by 140 votes against 15.—The subject was then postponed to the 7th of February, when some farther discussion took place; on that day Mr. Sheridan moved his two resolutions. They were opposed by Mr. Pitt, who, adverting to the dismissal of the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Parnell, (which had been referred to by Mr. Sheridan, as a proof that it was intended to carry the Union by the joint operation of corruption and intimidation) observed, that that minister, having differed from his colleagues on an important fundamental measure of government, had quitted his situation. If many gentlemen were connected together, with the honourable intention of acting for the service of their country, it was necessary, in order to preserve an unity of action, that they should agree in their system; and it was an error to suppose that either the resignation, or even the dismissal, of any one, was a system of corruption. Mr. Grey supported Mr. Sheridan; but on a division, the previous question, moved by



Mr. Pitt, was carried by 141 votes, against 25, and, consequently, the resolutions were rejected.

The discussion was renewed, when Mr. St. John asserted, that, as no proof had been adduced to convince the House that Scotland would not have been in an equally prosperous situation if the Union had not taken place, no inference in favour of the proposed measure could be drawn from the pretended consequences of that Union.—No other member of the Opposition, however, attempted to support this line of argument. But Mr. Grey contended, in answer to Mr. Pitt, that, although the settlement with Ireland in 1782 was not *final*, as to every point, it was a final adjustment as far as it related to the political independence of the Irish legislature. Mr. Dundas, in reply, admitted Mr. Grey's construction of the adjustment of 1782, and allowed that the Irish Parliament was then placed on the same footing of independence in relation to Great Britain, as Scotland was with regard to England before the Union of the two kingdoms. But he undertook to prove, by a reference to the affairs of Scotland, at, and after, the Union, that a similar measure would be productive of similar benefits to Ireland. He assumed as a fact, which could not, indeed, be controverted, that there existed in Ireland, at that time, a spirit of dissension and clamour, of



treachery and treason, which menaced the overthrow of the existing government. Conspiracies were so widely extended, their influence was so deeply infused into the minds of the people of Ireland, and the connexion between the two countries thereby so much endangered, that, without the immediate and active interference of government, the result might have been a total separation from this kingdom. It was the duty of the King's ministers, viewing Ireland in this perilous situation, to extricate her from the intrigues of the common enemy, by preserving and improving the connection which had so long and so happily subsisted. A more appropriate remedy for the disease, which poisoned the peace and happiness of Ireland, could not, in his apprehension, be imagined, than the incorporating union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms. Mr. Dundas then enforced many of the points urged by Mr. Pitt upon the subject; and ably contended for the superior efficacy of an United Parliament of the three kingdoms, of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to that of three separate and distinct legislatures. He reminded the House, too, that the Irish Parliament, with all its boasted independency, could not give vigour or effect to any one of its acts, without the approving sanction of a King who was resident in this



country; whence it was, that even Mr. Grattan, the champion of Irish independence, was obliged to admit, that "the Parliament of Ireland cannot act independently; for, in all cases of peace or war, it must implicitly follow the Parliament of Great Britain." The Parliament, formed by the union, had not deprived the Scotch members of any privilege which they before enjoyed; on the contrary, it had increased their privileges; for, instead of confining their deliberations to the affairs of Scotland, they were empowered to take part in discussions relative to the affairs of the whole British empire; and the Parliament of Ireland, incorporated on the same principles, would enjoy the same privileges. It was a misstatement of facts, to say, that the Union would destroy the Irish Parliament, for it would place the Irish members in the same situation as the members of the British Parliament.

When the union with Scotland was in contemplation, many melancholy pictures were presented to the public view, in the shape of prophecies. Not the least of these false prophecies was that which was contained in the memorable speech of Lord Belhaven; who, in a kind of prophetic, or rather poetic, vision, foretold the occurrence of many evils, the very



reverse of all which had come to pass; while the opposite predictions of Queen Anne, who had represented the most beneficial consequences to both countries as the inevitable result of the measure, had been strictly and fully verified.

In answer to the question, "why not give all these advantages to Ireland without an union," which had been triumphantly asked, Mr. Dundas observed, that without an incorporating union they would have been of no avail, for the strength and resources of the two countries must be consolidated, in order to enable Ireland to reap the full advantages from such concessions. It was from confidence in the strength of government that a communication of capital, and other sources of benefit, could alone arise. Besides, the English government could not, consistently with the duty which they owed to British subjects, make these concessions to Ireland, under its present constitution and separate legislature. They could not be safely granted, until an Imperial Parliament possessed a control over all the resources of the whole empire, together with the power of applying them to general purposes.

As much stress had been laid, by the Opposition, on what they chose to call the decided reprobation of the measure by the *Parliament* of Ireland, Mr. Dundas very wisely



reduced this assertion to its proper standard, by observing, that two component parts of that Parliament had expressly decided in favour of the union; while the Commons alone had rejected it, and that by a very inconsiderable majority. Under such circumstances, it was idle to talk of this as a solemn decision of Parliament. Sound reason and good sense, he had no doubt, would ultimately prevail; and he could not but augur well of the ultimate success of the measure, when he contemplated the clamour and violence by which the consideration of it had been resisted. The same popular clamour and discontent had been manifested while the union with Scotland was under discussion. Those noblemen and gentlemen who opposed it were hailed as the saviours of the country, while the friends of the union were reviled, insulted, and abused. The Duke of Queensbury, who was one of the commissioners for arranging the provisions of the treaty, narrowly escaped assassination. The union, however, became so popular, in a few years, from experience of its beneficial effects, that, in 1715, when the Pretender talked of dissolving it, the clamour became so great that he was obliged to forego his purpose.

The objections to the measure were again pressed by Mr. Sheridan, who denied that the



French had ever built their hopes of success in Ireland on the separation of the two kingdoms; though, had that been the case, it was not possible to account for the conduct of the French general, whose first step, after he landed in Ireland, was to proclaim the independence of that country, by the dissolution of the bond which connected her with England, who sought to allure the people to his standard, by declaring, that he came to give them liberty. He repeated what he had before urged against the competency of the Parliament, and the existence of a sovereignty, *in abeyance*, in the people; and he attempted to illustrate this position, by a reference to the proceedings of the British Convention, in 1688, and by a declaration, that if the people had not such a sovereignty, the present family on the Throne were *Usurpers*. The practice of the Revolution, he said, clearly shewed the force of this argument. When King James the Second abdicated the Throne, the Parliament did not proceed to do any act itself for settling the Crown, but expressly called a Convention, which the Lord Mayor of London, and fifty Commoners, were invited to attend. All the members who had sate in the Parliaments of Charles the Second were also summoned, and every step that could be taken, in the pressing



exigency of affairs, was actually taken, to shew, that the appointment to the Crown was *in the people, and in them only*.\*

Mr. Sheridan must have been very imperfectly acquainted with the history of the Revolution, have most egregiously misunderstood its leading events, or else have grossly misrepresented its most prominent feature, when he adduced the conduct of the convention in 1688 as a proof of the incompetency of the Irish Parliament of 1799; and of an inherent sovereignty in the people. It is not here meant to repeat the arguments which were used, in a former volume,† for the purpose of placing the transactions of the English Revolution in a proper point of view. At that time the Convention, which went the length of altering, limiting, and confining, the established succession to the Throne, derived no authority whatever from the people, and never once appealed to the people for their approbation or consent. Indeed, that Convention possessed no legal character whatever; and so strongly did it feel the singularity of its own situation, that, after it had performed the most important act of legislation, it deemed it expedient to

\* Annual Register, for 1799. P. 223.

† See Vol. II. p. 76—86.



obtain, at least, the shadow of a legal sanction for its act, not, however, by an appeal to the *people*, but by a determination that the King, whom it had itself appointed, should, *by virtue of his own authority*, change the Convention into a Parliament, thus depriving, as it were, the people of their constitutional power of electing their own representatives, and that on an occasion of the utmost importance, and one on which, if ever an idea had subsisted of *a sovereignty in abeyance* being vested in them, it was essentially necessary to call it forth into action. This conversion was performed, as a modern historian has remarked, “that the new settlement might be strengthened by a legal sanction.” Without entering into any further detail on the subject, it may suffice to observe, that the whole of this event proves the reverse of what Mr. Sheridan contended it did prove. It demonstrates that even this irregular Convention, not properly elected, nor legally summoned, was fully *competent* to discharge the most important functions of a legislature; by altering the line of succession to the Throne.—And it proves, also, that the Whigs of that day, who took a leading part in the business of the Revolution, never dreamt either of the incompetency of Parliament to perform *any* act of legislation, or of an inherent sove-



reignty existing in the people at large; because, when having no legal Parliament, and when the Throne was vacant, they did not consider it as necessary to appeal to, or even to consult, the people, but proceeded, without hesitation, to chuse a new Sovereign for them. Their whole conduct contradicts both the principles asserted, the incompetency of Parliament to form an Union, and the exclusive right of the people to sanction the measure, arising out of their imputed sovereignty.

Smollet, indeed, who contended for the illegality of the proceedings at the Revolution, and maintained that the right of altering the Constitution, or of deviating from the established practice of inheritance, in regard to the succession of the Crown, did not vest in the Parliament, accuses the Convention of having exceeded its power, and violated its duty, in not having referred the matter to the people. Indeed, it has since been acknowledged, by Mr. Sheridan himself, that the Revolution was effected *in contradiction to the sentiments of the people*, the majority of whom, he publicly declared, were *Jacobites*, that is attached to the proscribed House of Stuart. The practice of the Revolution, then, so far from showing the force, only demonstrates the weakness, and inapplicability, of the argument on which Mr. Sheridan so firmly relied, and



which he brought that practice to confirm. If, therefore, he were to be pinned down to either the letter or the spirit of his positive assertions, his authority might be cited to prove, that the Revolution of 1688 was achieved against the wishes of the people; and that the House of Brunswick are usurpers!

A gross mistake, under which the opponents of the Union laboured, or rather under which they chose to labour for the sake of the argument,—namely, that the Union was sought for the advantage of England, and not for the advantage of Ireland, was corrected by Mr. Windham. He observed, that he did not know what England had to wish from such a connection, for she already commanded the whole commerce of the world, and amply possessed the means of defence. Ireland was in a perilous state; but the seeds of the mischief lay in the Constitution itself, which contained no principle by which the ignorance of the people could be removed, or their ferocity suppressed. The proximate, or immediate, evil, however, Mr. Windham asserted, was French principles. This evil had withered the aged, vitiated the youthful, polluted the sources of thought, and given to the whole system of manners and morals a malignity of character, a grossness and laxity, which had rendered the obligations



between men nearly nugatory. The cure of the disorders, with which Ireland was convulsed, could be found only in the improvement of the manners of the lower orders of the people, by the introduction of British customs and British commerce, which, in his opinion, an Union bid fairer to do than any other means which could possibly be devised. He forbore to enter into a regular discussion of the jacobinical principle of the sovereignty of the people, asserted by Mr. Sheridan, but contented himself with observing, that the people had no political right to change the government, or to resist it, whatever might be the moral right that the people might be allowed speculatively to possess. The right of resistance was not a right acknowledged by, or known to, the British Constitution.

Mr. Grant (now Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls) proved the non-existence of the contested right, by the *argumentum ad absurdum*. The competency of the two Parliaments, he justly remarked, was no more a question than the competency of their electors, to whom, in fairness, according to the doctrine advanced, it should first be referred. From the electors the question must go to the people at large, who must be assembled, in convention, on Salisbury Plain, and the Curragh of Kildare. But even when there



assembled, every individual vote must be collected, and a majority must decide the question. To such ridiculous lengths was this theoretical dogma carried, the fallacy of which he could not but think must be perceived by those who advanced it. But, indeed, the position, if there were any truth in it, must be carried to a still greater extent; for, if the Sovereignty reside in the whole body of the people, the minority cannot be bound by the majority, unless the free consent of every individual, to abide by the will and decision of the greater number, has been previously ascertained. If the community were divided into ninety-nine parts, and forty-nine were to dissent from any given proposition, of an important political nature, submitted to their decision, while the other fifty parts, constituting a numerical majority, adopted it;—if the latter acted upon their own decision, and exercised the authority which it conferred over the dissenting minority, it would be as much a violation of *their* rights of Sovereignty, whether in *abeyance* or in *exercise*, as any act of a Parliament could be, however chosen, or however constituted. But the slightest reflection will suffice to shew the folly and the absurdity of a pretended right, which, if it existed, it would be morally, if not physically, impossible to exercise. On the next division which took



place, the supporters of the Union were one hundred and thirty-one, and its opponents only *nineteen*.

On the 13th of February, all the resolutions having received the final sanction of the Commons, they were sent up to the Peers for their concurrence. After they had been fully discussed, in the Upper House, an address was drawn up, and, having been approved by the Commons, was made the joint address of both Houses; and, as such, was presented to the Throne.

There was one extraordinary circumstance attending the discussions on this important subject. In the debates which occurred, respecting the Union with Scotland, at the beginning of the last century, the Union was opposed only as it was conceived to be injurious to the country to which its opponents belonged. And, at the present moment, the members of the Irish Parliament founded their Opposition on the supposed injurious tendency of the measure to their native land. But not so the *English* Opposition; like those universal philanthropists, whom modern philosophy has produced, who are tenderly alive to the interests of every country but their own, they opposed the Union with Ireland, solely on the ground that it would be injurious to *Ireland*;—an objection which, it would



seem, might have been left to Irish opponents to press. Its probable influence on the security and prosperity of Great Britain, whose people, exclusively, they represented, and whose interests, of course, it was their first duty to provide for, appears never to have entered into their view of the question. From whatever motive such extraordinary conduct proceeded, it is perfectly clear, that the members of the English Opposition must yield the palm of patriotism to the Scotch, in the first instance, and to the Irish, in the last. Indeed, their conduct bespoke any thing but a *patriotic* spirit.

During these discussions, in the British Parliament, great pains were taken by the government to reconcile the people of Ireland to the proposed measure of an Union. Mr. Pitt's speech was circulated, with great industry, in every part of the country; and the fixed determination which it expressed to exert himself to the utmost to carry a point which he deemed of vital importance to the interests of both kingdoms, tended materially to increase the public ferment. On the eleventh of February, Colonel Rochford asked Lord Castlereagh, in the Irish House of Commons, whether it was his intention to propose any other measure for restoring the public tranquillity, or whether that task was to be left to the gentlemen of the country.



Lord Castlereagh told him that he looked to the important measure of a legislative Union, as the only one which could give to the country permanent tranquillity, prosperity, and happiness; and, on this point, his opinion remained unchanged. On the fifteenth of that month, Lord Corry moved "that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the state of the nation." The real object of this motion was again to bring into discussion the question of the Union. It was opposed by Lord Castlereagh, on the ground of its having no specific object;—if it was intended to discuss the question of the Union, it was not necessary, for that purpose, to form a committee. He declared, however, that the opinion of the majority of that House, on the subject, together with the difference of opinion which obviously prevailed upon it in the country, was such as to induce government to let the matter sleep for the present; and his Lordship added, that he could not imagine any design so formidable, or so fatal to his country, as an attempt to produce a declaration which it was not in the power of Parliament to make, that the measure should never again be brought into discussion. Lord Corry's motion was rejected, on a division, by 123 votes against 103.



On the first of June, the Irish Parliament was prorogued, when Marquis Cornwallis informed the two Houses, that the joint address of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain had been laid before his Majesty, accompanied by resolutions, proposing and recommending a complete and entire Union between the two kingdoms, to be established by the mutual consent of their respective Parliaments, and founded upon equal and liberal principles; and that his Majesty would derive the greatest satisfaction from its accomplishment. After the prorogation, the friends and enemies of the measure displayed the most ardent zeal in their endeavours to increase the number of their parliamentary advocates. The Anti-Unionists accused their adversaries of employing all the means of corruption for the attainment of their object; while these, in their turn, reproached the others with having recourse to the meanest artifices for the purpose of procuring signatures to addresses, and of inviting the lowest of the rabble to affix their marks, or to subscribe their names. There was probably some foundation for their respective charges; the minds of men were heated; one side was intent on carrying the measure—the other was resolute in resisting it; and it is not likely, that, in such a state of things, the most scrupulous impartiality, or the



most delicate conduct, would be observed on either.

[1800.] These efforts and discussions continued through the remainder of the year 1799. On the 13th of January, 1800, a numerous and respectable body of the Catholics of Dublin assembled at the Royal Exchange, pursuant to public notice, and entered into strong resolutions against the Union. This proceeding rather surprised the Viceroy, whose exertions to conciliate the Catholics had been unremitting from his first arrival in Ireland; nor had they, indeed, been wholly unattended with success, as, in the preceding summer, he had procured addresses in favor of the Union, from the Catholic clergy and their flocks, in the counties of Mayo and Wexford, although that rebellion, the object of which was to produce the separation of the two countries, had there raged with the greatest fury.

On the 15th of January, the Irish Parliament again assembled, when, though no allusion was made to the Union in the Viceroy's speech, Sir Laurence Parsons moved, that his Excellency's speech on the last prorogation of Parliament should be read. After it had been read, he moved, by way of amendment to the address now proposed by Lord Loftus, and seconded by Colonel Crosbie, to introduce the



following words, “ Humbly to assure his Majesty, that this kingdom is inseparably united with Great Britain, and that it is the sentiments, wishes, and real interests, of all his Majesty’s subjects, that it shall ever *continue* so united, in the full enjoyment of a free constitution, in support of the honour and dignity of his Majesty’s Crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole empire, which blessings, of a free constitution, we owe to the spirited assertion of this kingdom of its birthright;—to a free and independent Parliament resident within it; and to the parental kindness of your Majesty, and the liberality of the British Parliament, in ratifying the same, in the year 1782, and which we have, at all times, felt, and do now particularly feel, it our bounden duty to maintain.” This motion gave rise to a long and animated discussion, which lasted the whole night, and till nine the following morning, when it was rejected by a majority of *forty-two*, ninety-six members having voted for it, and one hundred and thirty-eight against it;—so that it was evident a great change of sentiment had taken place since the prorogation, in the preceding summer, on the subject of the Union; though, possibly, the enemies of that measure might have weakened their force by the injudicious, impolitic, and



most irregular mode of bringing forward the discussion, instead of waiting till the measure was fairly before them. It was not long, however, before such an opportunity presented itself; for, on the fifth of February, Lord Castlereagh delivered a message from the Lord Lieutenant, who informed the House that he had it in command from his Majesty to lay before them the resolutions of the British Parliament, proposing and recommending an Union between the two kingdoms, and requesting them to take the same into consideration. In a very long and argumentative speech, opened with a reference to the decision of Parliament in the last session, and the change of opinion which reflection had since produced in the public mind, his Lordship unfolded all the advantages which, in his view of the measure, it was calculated to communicate to Ireland. He proposed eight resolutions, which contained the substance of those which had been voted by the British Parliament. By the fourth of these it was settled, that four Lords spiritual, of Ireland, by rotation of sessions, and twenty-eight Lords temporal, of Ireland, elected for life by the Peers of Ireland, should be the number to sit and vote, on the part of Ireland, in the House of Lords, in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. One hundred members were



proposed, as a proper number to represent the people of Ireland, in the House of Commons, of the Imperial Parliament. The fifth article declared, that the churches of the two kingdoms should be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called, 'the United Church of England and Ireland,' and that the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the said Church should remain in full force for ever; and that the continuance and preservation of the said United Church should be, for ever, held as a fundamental article of the Union. In order to preserve a fair proportion of commercial advantages, it was deemed necessary to establish certain countervailing duties;—a necessity much to be lamented, as on such an occasion as the Union of two independent countries, long allied to each other by the closest ties, and speaking the same language, it were much to be desired, that the inhabitants of both should be placed on perfectly the same footing, and so much identified, to all intents and purposes, as if they inhabited different portions of the same island. Each country was to defray its own national debt; but, after the expiration of twenty years, it was proposed, that the public expence should be divided into seventeen parts, fifteen of which were to be borne by Great Britain, and two by Ireland.



In adverting to that part of the propositions which related to the parliamentary representation of Ireland, Lord Castlereagh observed, that the number of representatives was fixed, on a just principle, in reference to the respective population, and future contributions, of the two countries. As many boroughs would be disfranchised by the new regulations, it would be proper, he said, to make compensation to such individuals as might be injured by the loss of their prescriptive privileges. This was one of the most delicate, and the most difficult, subjects which could possibly be submitted to discussion, in a House of Commons; though possibly less so in the Irish, than in the British, Parliament. It would be a woeful waste of words to enter into any argument for the purpose of shewing that no man possesses the right, *constitutionally* speaking, to send a member to Parliament, and, still less, can he be allowed to derive any pecuniary emolument from the possession of an interest or an influence, the exercise of which places him in the same situation, in point of fact, as if he possessed such a right; and it would necessarily follow, from this statement, that no compensation could be due to him from the public for the loss of that which the constitution does not permit him to enjoy. It would betray, however, a consummate ignorance of human nature, to



expect that men will resign an advantage, call it a *prescriptive privilege*, or what we will, which they feel they possess, and which they know they enjoy, without an adequate compensation for the loss of it. If, then, the Union were really a measure essential to the safety and prosperity of the empire; and if, (as was undoubtedly the case) it could not be carried, without making such compensation, it became a fair question for consideration, whether it would be politic, prudent, and justifiable, to propose it? Without adopting the jesuitical principle, that the end justifies the means, or the still more unchristian notion, that men may do evil that good may come of it; it may, perhaps, be found in political operations, that measures must always have a reference to the actual state of society, at the time when they are suggested; and, in respect of the compensation proposed in the present instance for the loss of the power to return members to Parliament, it may be observed, that if the compensation itself were not defensible on strict principles of political morality, it might nevertheless be justified, on the consideration that it would strike at the root of the vicious practices to which it related. Indeed, Lord Castlereagh seemed to have had this idea in his mind, when he remarked, that by the Union, the question of Parliamentary Reform



would be superseded, as the present plan was a reform of the most popular kind.

X  
With regard to the church, another topic of great importance, and of great delicacy also, he expressed his conviction of the insecurity of the Irish Protestant church, if it should continue in a state of separation from the church of England; but, in the event of an Union, he had no doubt that the present ecclesiastical establishment, founded on the Protestant ascendancy, would be stable and permanent. The Romanists, who, trusting to the great superiority of their numbers, were continually urging claims against the minority, would be checked in their confidence and forwardness, and would exhibit fewer marks of jealousy and mistrust; and their pretensions would be temperately discussed by an Imperial Parliament, at a time when local circumstances would cease to inflame.

X  
This certainly was one of the strongest arguments in favour of the Union, which could be pressed upon an Irish Protestant. As soon as the Union should take place, the people of both countries would become one people, and any claim to be preferred by the Irish Catholics, in reference to their numbers, must be considered with a view to the united population of the whole empire. That argument, then, in behalf of such claims, which was, at all times, more



plausible than solid, would lose its force and application; for the Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, taking them at the highest computation, would not form one fourth part of the people of the United Kingdom; whereas, in Ireland they amounted, according to some, to one-half, and according to others, to about three-fifths of the population.\*

\* As great difference of opinion, or rather, of *statement*, has prevailed respecting the relative numbers of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, I shall extract the observations of an intelligent writer on the subject, who had the best opportunity for acquiring accurate information.

“ Sir William Petty, in his ‘Political Anatomy,’ states the proportion of Protestants and Romanists in Ireland to be, as three to eight, in the year 1672, sixteen years before the revolution, so that, at that time, the Irish Protestants amounted to more than one-third of the inhabitants of the country. In the year 1732, an accurate enumeration was made, by order of government, of all the families in Ireland, distinguishing the Protestant families from the Romish, in each province, and a calculation was made, from thence, of the numbers of the Protestant and Romish inhabitants of Ireland; it was printed in Dublin in the year 1736, and re-printed in 1788. It appears from that calculation, that, in the year 1732, the number of Protestant inhabitants was, to that of the Romish, as one to two and a half. Dr. Burke, Romish titular Bishop of Ossory, wrote a book in Latin, which he entitled, ‘Hibernia Dominicana;’ it was printed at Brussels in the year 1762; and he particularly states, that an actual enumeration was made of the numbers of Protestants and Romanists in Ireland in the year 1731, and there were found to be then in the kingdom, seven hundred thousand four hundred and fifty-three Protestants; and one



It is here necessary to observe, that no pledge, or promise, whatever was made, either million three hundred and nine thousand, seven hundred and sixty-eight Romanists ; so that the proportion of Romanists and Protestants was not, in the year 1731, quite two to one, according to Dr. Burke. It is very likely that the Romish bishop had very accurate information of the relative numbers, perhaps better than that which could be deduced from the documents stated in the pamphlet, containing the calculation made in 1732. Dr. Burke also states, that the proportion had much increased on the Protestant side, between the year 1731 and the year 1762, by the operation of the Popery code, and the Protestant Charter Schools, and he makes grievous complaints of the increase of heretics, as he styles Protestants. The Popery code continued in full vigour till the year 1776, and its operation, together with the Charter Schools, must have increased the proportion on the Protestant side. There is a modern document which must have great weight in this question, taken from the number of beggars admitted into the House of Industry in Dublin, for a course of six years, beginning with the year 1784, and ending with the year 1789 ; and their respective religious persuasions.

“ This House of Industry is a general receptacle for all beggars who flock into Dublin from all parts of Ireland, for there are no poor-rates in Ireland. Divine service is performed separately in the receptacle for persons of the two persuasions, and chaplains are retained for each by the corporation.

“ Numbers admitted.

|              | Protestants. | Romanists. |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| In 1784..... | 696.....     | 1870       |
| 1785.....    | 768.....     | 2435       |
| 1786.....    | 1794.....    | 2912       |
| 1787.....    | 1493.....    | 3341       |
| 1788.....    | 854.....     | 3643       |
| 1789.....    | 798.....     | 3615       |
| Total..      | 6403         | 17,816.    |



by Mr. Pitt, or by his authority, directly, or indirectly, to the Romanists of Ireland, that the few restrictions under which they still laboured, and forming the only bars to a full participation of political power, should be

“ The Romish beggars admitted, during a course of six years, did not exceed the Protestant beggars in the proportion of three to one. The house of industry is filled with the lowest class; and as the property in the hands of Irish Protestants is to that in the hands of Irish Romanists as *thirty-nine* to *one*, the proportion of beggars on the side of Irish Romanists to those on the Protestant side must vastly exceed the proportion of Romanists and Protestants in the nation at large. Besides, although wandering beggars flock to Dublin from all parts of the kingdom, the fewest certainly come from the northern counties, which abound most with Protestants; for, having a flourishing manufacture, these countries send forth fewest beggars. From all these documents it may be fairly concluded, that Irish Romanists exceed Irish Protestants in number throughout the whole kingdom in no greater proportion than that of two to one, perhaps in a much less.

“ The Romish Convention in Dublin, in the year 1792, first broached the positions, that Irish Romanists exceeded Irish Protestants, in the proportion of three to one; and that the gross number of the inhabitants amounted to four millions; consequently that the Romanists amounted to three millions. They never produced any document on which they pretended to found a calculation; however, they then admitted that Irish Protestants amounted to one million. It is remarkable, that this Convention never scrupled to advance and publish any falsehood whatever, which they thought might be of advantage to their cause; of which their petition to his Majesty is a very prominent instance.”



removed, if they would give their consent to the Union. No other prospect, and no other hopes, were held out to them than what might be founded on the general position advanced by Mr. Pitt, in his own speeches, and by Lord Castlereagh, his confidential agent in Ireland, in all the business relating to the Union, that the claims of the Catholics would be canvassed with more impartiality, and decided upon with more coolness, in an Imperial Senate, than they could be by an Irish Parliament, which must, of necessity, be subject to the influence of local considerations that could not possibly operate in England. If any letter, or paper, was circulated in Ireland conveying a different impression to the minds of the Catholics, I am warranted to assert, in the most positive manner, that it was composed and issued without the authority or knowledge of Mr. Pitt, and must have proceeded either from a strange misconception, or from a misguided zeal, on the part of the Viceroy. The fact here stated must be known to every Member of the British Cabinet, at that period, who would not fail to correct any mistatement on a point of such importance. Mr. Pitt, indeed, did, himself, entertain hopes, that the Union would be productive of such a change in the public mind as would remove every objection to those ulti-



mate concessions which the Romanists, who would never be satisfied while there should be any thing left to grant on the one side, and to acquire on the other, would not fail to urge. But he knew very well that, unless this change was produced, and the concessions were sanctioned with the free and full approbation of the public, they could not be attended with those national advantages, the certainty of obtaining which could alone justify the Parliament in granting them. And, however sanguine his own hopes might be, he certainly never gave the Romanists any other encouragement to expect their fulfilment than what fairly arose out of the consideration before noticed.

The most violent opposer of the Union was Mr. Grattan, whose speech was distinguished chiefly for boldness of assertion, wildness of declamation, and virulence of abuse. He did not blush to affirm, in the debate, on the first day of the present Session, that "any little Minister, any petty lawyer, any profligate pander of power, may tear the edifice of the Constitution to the ground." The Union, he insisted, would be "No Union," although he told the House "it will be the exclusion of your people, and the extinction of yourselves." In a style of eloquence, peculiar to



himself, he devoted the British Ministers to “an *immortality of eternal* infamy.” This singular anathema he extended to the Irish Parliament, in case they should be bold enough not to abide by his opinion. “If you surrender your Parliament,” said he to them, “you surrender yourselves up to eternal infamy, and your country to irrevocable destruction.” Well might another member ask: “Shall I call this language arrogant?—or shall I term it insulting? I do assert, and I will maintain, that it is empty, noisy, delusive, declamation, calculated to frighten children, or to awe lunatics; but certainly not adapted to engage the attention, still less to convince the understanding, of a rational being. Sir, I feel a very painful mortification, when I consider, that there could exist, but for one moment, in any breast, the expectation that the Irish House of Commons could be moved by such a caricature of energy and eloquence. Let us reflect but for an instant on what foundation this denunciation of eternal infamy is built. Truly it rests merely upon the—“I say” of the honourable gentleman. He may say, and repeat it, till the shores of Waterford, of Cork, and of Limerick, echo back the sound! but I say, Sir, that one whisper of testimony and truth shall



accomplish more than the thunder of a thousand orators."\*

The same tone and temper were exhibited by Mr. Grattan, in every debate on this subject. His violence exposed him to an attack from Mr. Corry, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which produced one of those absurd appeals to the sword, which, unfortunately, are more prevalent in Ireland than in any other country. On a division, the resolutions proposed by Lord Castlereagh were adopted, by one hundred and fifty-eight votes against one hundred and fifteen. It is to be remarked that, in the course of this discussion, the Members who opposed the Union uniformly insisted, that the settlement, or adjustment, of the Irish Constitution in 1782, was supposed to be final and immutable; but it could not escape observation, that the Ponsonbys,† Mr. Grattan, and others

\* *A Reply to a Speech delivered in the Irish House of Commons, on Wednesday, January 15, 1800, by Mr. Grattan, on the subject of a Legislative Union.*---By an Absentee.

† That the reader may be enabled to form some idea of the style or character of the speeches of those patriotic members, who had been the steady supporters of administration, until they chose so far to imitate the conduct of naval mutineers as to sign a *Round Robin*, in the administration of Lord Buckingham, I present him with a short extract from a speech of Mr. George Ponsonby, on the 15th of May, 1799, in which



of the same party, had frequently proposed, between the years 1792 and 1798, measures of reform which, if adopted, would have effected a complete change in that Constitution. Many of the Members who voted for the Union were, on their return from the House, grossly insulted

he introduced the question of the Union, although the subject of discussion had not the smallest connection with, or reference to, it.

“ Sir, I have not been in the House to hear all that has been said, but I am shocked, and afflicted, to understand from the honourable Member who spoke last, at the other side of the House, that all the gentlemen around me *have lost their senses, and are all gone mad*. This affects me extremely, because I hope for their sober concurrence on a future day, when a measure directed to the ruin of this country shall again be discussed in this House. But I am concerned to find, by the speech of the honourable Member opposite to me, that I must look to a *lucid interval* for such concurrence. He says the Parliament are for an Union,— that the people are for an Union, and yet *the Parliament is to excite the people to a Rebellion*, if Parliament should be so good as to comply with their wishes and give them an Union; but this is not the extent of our calamity, for I find a great part of the Community has gone mad as well as this House; for, notwithstanding the great number of public declarations against the measure of an Union, those who had thus declared themselves are now in a fit of insanity, mad for the accomplishment of the project. It is impossible, Mr. Speaker, to bear up against these occasional and national fits of insanity.— I feel it dangerous to trust myself in the House, lest I should be bitten and go mad myself also.”



by the populace; on which account a guard of horse was afterwards stationed near the House to prevent a repetition of similar outrages;—a precaution by no means superfluous, in the ferment which then prevailed.

It is not surprising that the Irish House of Commons should have been accused of unsteadiness and inconsistency, in thus adopting a measure in one Session, which they had rejected the Session before. But, without entering into the merits of this charge, it is but just to observe, that in respect of the Union they stood upon very different grounds from those by which their conduct was to be tried, on the question of granting the elective franchise, and other privileges, to the Romanists. In the latter case, the question had been often, and deliberately discussed; it had been rejected by a very large and decisive majority, and no new circumstances had intervened in the period which occurred between their peremptory rejection, and their unqualified adoption, of the same measure, by a majority which amounted nearly to unanimity! But, in the former case, though the question could not be said to be perfectly new to the House, yet had it not undergone any parliamentary discussion previous to the Session of 1799; and it was then taken up with great heat, and rejected



without even an examination of the principle on which it was to be proposed, much less of any of those details which could alone enable a deliberative and legislative assembly to form a competent judgment upon it; it was first carried by a single vote, and then rejected by a majority of *five* only. It was attended, too, with another circumstance which still increased the difference between this case and that of the repeal of the penal laws against Romanists. On the first division, in 1799, only two hundred and thirteen Members voted, one hundred and four for the Union, and one hundred and nine against it; whereas, on the present occasion, no less than two hundred and seventy-five voted, one hundred and fifty-eight for the Union, and one hundred and fifteen against it. So that, for any thing which appears on the face of the proceeding, no change of sentiment in the Members of the House who voted on the question, had taken place; for, although the advocates of the measure had increased, by fifty-four, the number of its opponents had not diminished; on the contrary, it was greater by eleven on the last, than it was on the first, division.

The Minister having thus carried his propositions in the Lower House, they were sent to the Upper House, where, on the tenth of



February, they underwent a long and serious discussion. They were moved by the Chancellor, Lord Clare, who entered into an exhibition of strong facts, and a train of cogent arguments, in order to prove, that the late rebellion, and all the treasonable plots and combinations which preceded it, for some years, had arisen, in a great measure, from the seditious speeches of a set of factious demagogues in Parliament, who possessed ostentatious talents, but were destitute of judgment, principle, and property. He represented these men as making a trade of working on popular delusion, with a view to kindle strife and turbulence, that they might be bought off by the government. While seats in Parliament were attained by such mercenary adventurers, Ireland would be kept in a constant storm, and the passions of a savage and barbarous populace would be raised and directed against the opulent and respectable part of the nation. The first division on the question was seventy-five for the Union, and twenty-six against it. And the various resolutions were carried through the Lords by a large majority.

Several divisions took place in the Commons, in all of which the majority remained with the Minister. The resolution respecting the parliamentary representation, on which it



was natural to expect the greatest opposition, was carried, on the 10th of March, by a majority of nineteen. On the 13th of that month, the Opposition, headed by Sir John Parnell, made another effort to impede the progress of the measure, by moving an address to the King, requesting him to dissolve the present Parliament, and to convoke another before the final arrangement of the Union. In the course of this debate, which lasted till four in the morning, the Solicitor-General accused Mr. Saurin, a Barrister, who spoke strongly in favour of an appeal to the people, of "unfurling the bloody flag of rebellion;" while Mr. Egan, on the other hand, charged Ministers with having "unfurled the flag of prostitution and corruption!" After much crimination and recrimination of this kind, the House divided, when the motion was rejected by 150 votes against 104.

After all the resolutions had been discussed, and digested, by the Committee of the whole House, they were reported on the 21st of March, when it was agreed that they should be carried to the Upper House by Lord Castle-reagh, and the concurrence of the Peers be desired. On the 27th, the Lords informed the Commons, that they had adopted the resolutions with certain amendments, and these having



received the sanction of the Commons, it was resolved to present an address to his Majesty, expressive of the cordial approbation of the Parliament of Ireland of a legislative union; and stating, that they considered the resolutions of the two Houses of the British Parliament as wisely calculated to form the basis of such a settlement; that they had, therefore, adopted them as their guide, and now laid before his Majesty the resolutions to which they had agreed, and which, if approved by the British Parliament, they were willing to ratify and confirm.

This address was communicated by his Majesty to the British Parliament on the second of April; and on the 21st of that month the subject underwent a full discussion in the House of Commons, when Mr. Pitt proposed, that the resolutions voted by the Irish Parliament should be adopted by that House. He again entered, on this occasion, into an explanation of the principle on which the measure was founded, into a consideration of the advantages which it was calculated to afford to both countries, and into an examination of the details of the various resolutions which had received the sanction of the Irish Legislature. Alluding to the question of Parliamentary Reform, which some had thought



should accompany this measure, he made an appeal to the candour of every man, whether, if, as was generally admitted, the Union was itself a measure of great difficulty, it would be prudent, or safe, to involve it in a question of the greatest perplexity, of the most embarrassing nature, and attended with fatal consequences, as to our internal interests? He declared, that if any thing could throw a doubt upon the question of union,—if any thing could, in his mind, counterbalance the advantages that must result from it, it would be the necessity of disturbing the representation of England; but, fortunately, no such necessity existed. Mr. Pitt took this opportunity of stating, without reserve, his present sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform.

“ In stating this, Sir,” said he, “ I have not forgotten what I have myself formerly said, and sincerely felt, upon this subject; but I know that all opinions must necessarily be subservient to times and circumstances; and that man who talks of his consistency, merely because he holds the same opinion for ten or fifteen years, when the circumstances under which that opinion was originally formed are totally changed, is a slave to the most idle vanity. Seeing all that I have seen since the period to which I allude; considering how



little chance there is of that species of Reform  
 to which alone I looked, and which is as diffe-  
 rent from the modern schemes of Reform, as  
 the latter are from the constitution; seeing that  
 where the greatest changes have taken place  
 the most dreadful consequences have ensued,  
 and which have not been confined to that  
 country where the change took place, but have  
 spread their malignant influence in every quar-  
 ter of the globe, and shaken the fabric of every  
 government; seeing that in this general shock  
 the Constitution of Great Britain has alone  
 remained pure and untouched in its vital princi-  
 ples; when I see that it has resisted all the  
 efforts of Jacobinism, sheltering itself under  
 the pretence of a love of liberty; when I see  
 that it has supported itself against the open  
 attacks of its enemies, and against the more dan-  
 gerous reforms of its professed friends; that it  
 has defeated the unwearied machinations of  
 France, and the no less persevering efforts of  
 Jacobins in England; and that, during the  
 whole of the contest, it has uniformly main-  
 tained the confidence of the people of England;  
 I say, Sir, when I consider all these circum-  
 stances, I should be ashamed of myself if any  
 former opinions of mine could now induce me  
 to think that the form of representation which,  
 in such times as the present, has been found



amply sufficient for the purpose of protecting the interests, and securing the happiness, of the people, should be idly and wantonly disturbed, from any love of experiment, or any predilection for theory. Upon this subject, Sir, I think it right to state the inmost thoughts of my mind; I think it right to declare my most decided opinion, that, even if the times were proper for experiments, any, even the slightest, change in such a constitution must be considered as an evil."

So much obloquy have been cast on Mr. Pitt, for an imputed inconsistency of conduct on this question of Reform, that it is an act of justice due to his memory to record the reasons for that change of sentiment, out of which the imputation arose. Let these opinions be examined with candour and attention, and they will be found to contain indisputable proofs of political wisdom, of a manly and independent mind, unfettered by prejudice, ever open to conviction, and opposing the practical lessons of experience to the dogmatical theory of the schools. It will be observed, that Mr. Pitt here grounds his abandonment of *the only species of Reform* to which he ever looked, on the improbability of obtaining it;—a circumstance to which a statesman will ever pay due regard. It is hoped that, after this firm and candid



explanation, no man will be so bold, or so unjust, as to renew the charge of inconsistency against him on this subject, without first *demonstrating* the fallacy, or the insufficiency, of his arguments, in defence of his conduct.

As much had been said on the increased influence which the Crown would acquire by the reduction of the Irish members to one hundred,\* Mr. Pitt declared that some provision ought to be made upon the subject. He felt this sentiment as strongly as any man; but it was impossible to provide against it by an article of the Union, to be binding upon the United Parliament, because it had been found, by experience, that the number of offices to be held by members must always remain at the discretion of Parliament, to be regulated, from time to time, as circumstances might require. He thought nothing could be more fair than that which he had to propose on this point, namely, that no

\* It was urged by Lord Holland, in the House of Peers, as an objection to the Union, that it would alter the representation of the country; an innovation which, by increasing the influence of the Crown, would, in his opinion, have the most unhappy effects on the country. This forms a solitary exception to the observation before made, that the objections started to this measure were grounded on the supposed injury which it would do to *Ireland*, without any reference to its bad effects upon *England*.



more than twenty of the Irish members of the Imperial Parliament should hold places during pleasure; and if it should so happen that there should be a greater number of this description, elected to the first Parliament, then those who had last accepted places should vacate their seats;—this, upon the whole, he thought, would obviate every objection that could be made in point of principle.

Mr. Pitt then took a view of those resolutions which related to the commerce of the country, all of which he proved to be founded on the liberal principle of mutual accommodation and advantage. He expressed his satisfaction that the Parliament and the people of Ireland had, at length, been led to regard the measure in its true point of view. He did not, however, mean to say, that there were, among the intelligent part of the public, none who were against the Union;—he knew there were, and he knew, too, that, in a question involving so many interests, the same thing would, to different individuals, appear in different points of view;—hence arose a diversity of opinion. This had been the case in almost every thing which had ever been argued, and must be so in every thing which became an object of contention; but, after all, it was clear, that the Parliament and people of Ireland were in a situation to



judge of the measure. It was not because the measure was not vigorously opposed, the friends of the Union had had to stand against the threats of popular violence—against the enemies of the government, under the conduct of Protestants—against the violent and inflamed spirit and fierce attack of the Irish Catholics—and against the aggregate of all evils, the spirit of all mischief, the implacable opposition, and determined hostility, of furious jacobinism; they had to meet the inflamed passions of disappointed ambition, which, under the name and pretext of superior patriotism, under colour of jealousy for the freedom of others, under affected tenderness for landed interest, affected care for commercial welfare, would reduce the State to ruin, because, those whom it affected were not its rulers. Notwithstanding all this opposition, *the* parties engaged in it had not been able to prove any thing, but that their own fury was ungovernable, their predictions were chimerical, and their hopes delusive. The friends of the measure had had to stand against the principles which fomented, and, unhappily, inflamed, the late Irish rebellion;—they had to contend against the active and mischievous efforts of the friends and champions of jacobinism, to whom the tendency of the Union to preserve order, was a sufficient reason for hating it, because,



any thing like order was an extinction of their hopes. The country had seen, that the wisdom of the Parliament, and the good sense of the people of Ireland, had prevailed over this host of foes; it had seen the friends who supported, and the enemies who opposed, this great national object; and was enabled, by all that had happened, to judge pretty accurately of the sentiments of both, with their tendency or effect on the fate of the British empire.

As soon as Mr. Pitt's motion for adopting the Irish resolutions was put, Mr. Grey moved, as an amendment, "that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he will be graciously pleased to direct his Ministers to suspend all proceedings on the Irish Union, till the sentiments of the Irish people, respecting that measure, can be ascertained."

In support of this strange proposition, which went to establish a difference between the sentiments of the people and those of their representatives, which, though it may certainly exist, in point of fact, the constitution does not admit, and which, therefore, cannot form the ground of a legislative measure, Mr. Grey pressed all the arguments against the measure which the Irish Opposition had urged. He asserted, that the petitions in Ireland, in favour of the Union, had been obtained by

*Mr Grey  
in 1790*

*L. Grey on  
Emancipation  
in 1823*

*The People's  
Sentiments are  
to be listened  
to & not petitions  
as expressing  
the voice of the  
People*

*Lord Hallam - the same*



clandestine and fraudulent means; and applied to the transaction Buckingham's description of his attempt to persuade the citizens of London to accept the Third Richard for their King.

“ Some followers of mine own,  
At lower end o' the hall, hurl'd up their caps,  
And some ten voices cried, God save King Richard!  
And thus I took the 'vantage of these few—  
Thanks, gentle citizens and friends, quoth I;  
This general applause, and cheerful shout,  
Argues your wisdom, and your love to Richard.”

In reply to these and other observations, Mr. Pitt remarked, that when the Irish Parliament had rejected the Union, the year before, the Opposition were disposed to pay the greatest deference to their decision, and thought it amply sufficient to induce the British Parliament to abandon the point altogether; but now, that the voice of the Irish Parliament was in favour of the measure, it was no longer deserving of attention, but an appeal to the people was absolutely necessary. Hence it was evident, that it was their own opinions, and not those of the public, which those gentlemen wished to make the rule of conduct to the legislature. Mr. Pitt declared his dissent from the doctrine now broached. There might be occasions, but



they would ever be few, when an appeal to the people was the just mode of proceeding on important subjects. The present, however, was not a fit moment to appeal to the people of Ireland, when, if they did so, the whole economy of our legislative system, the customary proceedings, in cases which involved the rights and liberties of the people, the jurisprudence of the country, would be thrown into confusion, and all this at a moment when the Parliament was about to effect that which it had declared to be essential to the peace of Ireland, and to the safety of the empire. The ground on which this appeal was pressed was remarkable. It arose from a wish to ascertain the sentiments of the people of Ireland, which were assumed beforehand to be adverse to the Union. If this were believed, it behoved those who made the assertion to adduce proofs in support of it. But Mr. Pitt declared, he should adhere to the opinion of the Parliament of Ireland, and would not, therefore, consent to a convocation of primary assemblies, and of bodies of men, to vote addresses on French principles, arrayed, as they would be, against legislative authority, and constitutional freedom. But, even if the people were resorted to, who would take the expression of their opinion, given amidst tumult, in the fury of passion? Who would assume



hat opinion as fit to be adopted for the rule of conduct in a great political undertaking?—He shewed that the Opposition had little respect for the opinion which they now professed to revere, since, when the voice of the people had sanctioned the conduct of his Majesty's government, they retired from the House of Commons, chose to neglect their duty to their constituents, to desert the post of honour, or of danger, because that conduct was approved by the people. Such, then, was the fallacy of the general opinions of those honourable persons, who, added to the weight of their own very grave authority, then desired the House to resort to public meetings, there to collect the sentiments of a mixed populace. When he considered how defective must be any opinion that was the result of an appeal to a people wholly influenced by a few factious demagogues, Mr. Pitt said he could not adopt it as a rule of action. Mr. Grey's amendment was rejected by 236 votes against 30. After the resolutions had been separately considered, and some few amendments made, Mr. Pitt moved, on the 5th of May, "That an address be presented to his Majesty, humbly begging leave to acquaint his Majesty, that, in conformity to his Majesty's gracious message, laying before them the resolutions of the Lords and Commons of Ire-



land, they had proceeded to resume the consideration of the important subject of a legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland; that it was with unspeakable satisfaction they had observed the conformity of the said resolutions to those principles which they had humbly submitted to his Majesty in the last session of Parliament, as calculated to form the basis of such a settlement. That, with the few alterations and additions which they had found it necessary to suggest, they considered these resolutions as fit to form the articles of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. And, if these alterations and additions should be approved of by the two Houses of the Parliament of Ireland, they were ready to confirm and ratify these articles, in order that the same might be established for ever, by the mutual consent of both Parliaments. That they offered up to his Majesty their humble congratulations on the near prospect of the accomplishment of a work, which his majesty, as the common father of his people, had justly declared to be so near his heart, concurring with his Houses of Parliament in Ireland, on the full conviction that, by incorporating the legislature, and consolidating the resources, of the two kingdoms, we should increase the power and stability of the British empire, and, at the same time, contribute, in



the most effectual manner, to the improvement of the commerce, and the preservation of the liberties, of his Majesty's subjects in Ireland."

This address having passed the House of Commons, was communicated to the Lords, in a conference, on the ninth of May. The Lords themselves had previously made some slight alterations in the resolutions which the Commons had approved; and the address, now receiving their sanction, was made the joint address of the two houses, and was presented, as such, to the King. His Majesty, in his answer, expressed the greatest satisfaction at their proceedings, and engaged to communicate, without delay, to his Parliament of Ireland, the sentiments and declarations contained in the address, "The disposition which had been manifested by his Parliaments, in both kingdoms, afforded his Majesty the best pledge of the speedy and prosperous conclusion of the great measure of the Union; an event to which he looked forward with the most anxious expectation, as tending, above all others, to secure and perpetuate the happiness of all his subjects."

The resolutions were accordingly transmitted to Ireland; in a short time they received the final sanction of the Parliaments of both kingdoms, and, afterwards, the royal fiat, on the 2d of July. Thus, at length, was this most



important regulation placed on the statute book of the realm. It required the clear and comprehensive mind of Mr. Pitt to perceive the necessity, and to foresee the advantages, of an incorporate Union ; and all his bold and enterprizing spirit to persevere in the means necessary for its accomplishment, in opposition to difficulties which, to many, appeared insurmountable, and to a torrent of prejudice which it seemed impracticable to stem. It was the observation of one, who well understood the real interests of the British empire, and whose learning, sagacity, and wisdom, rendered him not only an ornament to the country which gave him birth, but an honour to human nature, that, "If England, Scotland, and Ireland were united, it would be such a trefoil, as no other sovereign wears in his crown."\*

\* Lord Bacon.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

Transactions in Egypt after the battle of the Nile—Means adopted by Buonaparté for securing his conquest—Blasphemous proclamations an essential part of his *moral* artillery—Converts the koran of Mahomet into a code of Jacobinism—Holds a *divan*, and establishes an Institute at Grand Cairo—Insurrection in that city—Buonaparté resolves to besiege St. John of Acra—Jaffa taken by assault—Deliberate murder of three thousand eight hundred Turkish prisoners within a mile of the town—Reasons assigned for this barbarous deed—Orders five hundred and eighty of his own sick soldiers to be poisoned in the hospital at Jaffa—Noble conduct of a French physician on that occasion—Blasphemous letter of Buonaparté to Ghezzar Pacha Governor of Acra—Arrival of Sir Sidney Smith with some British vessels at Acra—The French lay siege to the place—Their train of artillery taken by the British ships—Various ineffectual assaults on the town—Gallant conduct of the British Admiral—The French make some practicable breaches in the walls—Various ineffectual assaults on the town—Strong mark of Ghezzar's attachment to the English—A Turkish reinforcement arrives—The Turks, led on by the English, repulse the French on all sides—Treachery of Buonaparté—He abandons the siege and returns to Egypt—Prefers a charge of cruelty against Sir Sidney Smith—Its falsehood demonstrated—Communica-



tion between Buonaparté and Tippoo Sultaun—Projects of  
 Tippoo for the extirpation of the British from India—His  
 treaty with the French—Wisdom, vigour, and decision,  
 displayed by Lord Mornington, Governor-General of India,  
 in counteracting the machinations of the enemy—Entrance  
 of the British army into the Mysore—Capture of Seringa-  
 patam—Death of Tippoo—Buonaparté deserts his post  
 in Egypt, and returns to France—State of the French army  
 at the period of his departure—Falsehoods contained in  
 his valedictory address to his troops—His Letter to Kleber  
 —Military operations on the Continent of Europe—Rela-  
 tive force of the hostile armies—The French enter Suabia  
 without any previous declaration of war—Military opera-  
 tions in Germany—In the country of the Grisons—And  
 in the Tyrol—The Archduke Charles compels General  
 Jourdan to evacuate Suabia—The French expelled from the  
 Grisons—Actions in Switzerland—The Archduke attacks  
 the French position before Zurich—Desperate engagement  
 —Massena evacuates the post—Operations in Italy—Suc-  
 cessive defeats of the French, under Scherer, by Generals  
 Kaim and Kray—Battle near Verona, gained by the Aus-  
 trians—Retreat of the French beyond the Mincio—Arrival  
 of Marshal Suwarrow, with 20,000 Russians—Defeats the  
 French on the Adda—The allies enter Milan—Moreau,  
 who has succeeded Scherer, falls back upon Turin—Loss  
 of the French from the commencement of the campaign  
 —Moreau's head quarters at Coni—The allies enter Turin  
 and besiege the citadel—General Macdonald, with the  
 army of Naples, arrives in Tuscany---Endeavours to form  
 a junction with Moreau---Is defeated with great loss, and  
 returns to Tuscany---Force of the Allies at this period---  
 Macdonald again evacuates Tuscany, and joins Moreau---  
 Surrender of Alexandria to the Allies---Mantua capitu-  
 lates---The French, under Joubert, seek to raise the siege  
 of Tortona---Battle of Novi---Suwarrow attacks the



French in a most advantageous position---Is repulsed three different times---General Joubert killed---Skilful manœuvre of General Melas---The French position carried---Great loss sustained by the French in this action---Suwarrow departs for Switzerland---Arrival of General Korsakow and a Russian army in Switzerland---Strange conduct of the Archduke Charles---Mysterious policy of the Austrian cabinet---The Archduke leaves Switzerland, at the moment when his success was certain---The Russians and Austrians defeated by Massena---General Hoetze killed---The Russians, under Korsakow, evacuate Switzerland---Perilous situation of Suwarrow---Massena marches against him---Suwarrow defeats the French in different actions---Makes good his retreat to Germany---Object of the campaign frustrated by the unprincipled conduct of Austria---British expedition against Holland---The first division of the army lands at the Helder---Surrender of the Dutch fleet to Admiral Mitchell---Arrival of the Russian auxiliaries in Holland---The Duke of York takes the command of the allied force---The Allies advance---Defeat the French and Dutch in different engagements---Misconduct of the Russians, in two of the actions---The Allies resolve to evacuate the country---Reflections on their situation---Their means of obtaining the most favourable terms---Convention concluded with the French General---Its conditions considered---The British troops withdrawn from Holland---The Dutch colony of Surinam surrendered to the British.

[1799-1800.] While Mr. Pitt was intent on consolidating the strength of the empire, by internal regulations, equally calculated to promote its present security, and to ensure its



future prosperity, the distant shores of Egypt and of Syria were destined to witness the triumph of the British arms. After the destruction of the French fleet, at the battle of the Nile, the French army was left with little hope of receiving any farther reinforcements from Europe. The efforts of Buonaparté, therefore, were directed to secure, in the first instance, the means of subsistence, and, in the next, to preserve the health of his troops, and to augment their numbers, by enrolling in his service such of the young natives, of different descriptions, as he could persuade to enlist under his banners. After he had collected the remains of the crews of the different ships which had been destroyed at the mouth of the Nile, he found himself at the head of an army of nearly forty thousand men. He began, in order to attach the people to his cause, by playing off what has been, not unaptly, called his *moral*, or rather his *immoral*, *artillery*. Without one principle of either religion or morals, he had no scruple of conscience to subdue, before he penned or uttered those horrid blasphemies which issued from his lips, and appeared in his proclamations, whenever he had any point to gain by them. This may possibly be termed, by those who sink, in their admiration of the military leader, the disgusting vices of the man, a mere *ruse de guerre*; but it, assuredly, is such a



stratagem as no *Christian* chief would employ. In his memorable proclamation, intended at once to tranquillize and to allure the simple inhabitants of Egypt, he did not scruple to disown his redeemer; "There is no God, but only one God; he has not any son or associate in his kingdom;" were the words of this impious hypocrite. By an impudent affectation of knowledge, meant to conceal his real ignorance, he rendered the creed of despotism, the koran, a code of jacobinism. He told the astonished natives that it proclaimed the equality of men, and acknowledged no preference but what arose from the possession of understanding, ingenuity, and science; then, deducing from his sublime theory a practical inference, more intelligible to the people whom he addressed, he assured them that their superiors had no right to monopolize beautiful women, handsome slaves, fine horses, and fine houses. Nay, he even denied the right of possession to the property which they enjoyed, for the decisive reason, that they could shew no lease from God. In a word, every evil he imputed to the Mamelukes, and wished to impress a belief that the French were come to restore the golden age of Egypt, with all the "Great cities, large canals, and extensive trade," which the avarice, injustice, and tyranny, of the Mamelukes had destroyed.



After he had obtained possession of Grand Cairo, and of the intermediate country between that city and Alexandria, as well as of the banks of the Nile, he established a kind of mongrel government, nearly resembling the French oligarchy; the chief object of which was to station persons in different districts, to levy taxes for the benefit of the French, and to wrest from the people every thing which could contribute to the ease and comfort of their enemies. He established a divan at Cairo; and an institute, in which the vagabond Scavans, whom he had brought with him from France, were employed. Buonaparté's arts, however, failed to produce the desired effect, and his arms alone could ensure the obedience which he courted, or avert the danger which he dreaded. A popular insurrection at Cairo had nearly proved fatal to his cause. A General Dupuy, and some hundreds of the French were killed before it could be suppressed; of course, a much larger number of the insurgents perished, and not a few afterwards fell by the hands of the executioner; for Buonaparté acted the sovereign wherever he went, and treated all who opposed him as traitors and rebels. Various skirmishes, and some sharp actions, took place between the invaders and the Mamelukes, under the command of the Beys, in different parts of the coun-



try, particularly in Upper Egypt, in all of which the superior discipline and tactics of the French baffled the rude courage and desultory attacks of their opponents.

But though Buonaparté had thus frustrated every attempt to thwart him in his designs, and had succeeded in establishing, by his sword, an absolute dominion in the country immediately occupied by his troops, he still found himself in a situation of peril. For it could not be supposed that the Porte would leave him in quiet possession of a portion of her territory; or that England would suffer him to reap the fruits of his iniquity, without an effort to wrest them from his hands. Indeed, the Porte had issued orders to the Governor of Syria and the Bashaw of Damascus, to raise a body of troops to act against the French; and these orders had been implicitly obeyed. Buonaparté made a vain attempt to persuade the former of these officers, Ghezzar Pacha, that he was a friend of the Grand Seignior, and had no intentions hostile to his interests. Ghezzar made no answer to the communication, but ordered all the French who were at Acra to be seized and thrown into prison.

Buonaparté, aware that, if an army was sent from Europe to attack him on the one side, while a Turkish force from Asia assailed



him on the other, he might not be able to extricate himself from the difficulties with which he would be surrounded, and he, therefore, resolved to attack the Turks in the first instance, in the hopes of subduing them before they could receive assistance from other quarters. He accordingly made preparations for an attack upon Acra, the seat of Ghezzar's government, and resolved, if he should succeed in that attempt, of which he had not the smallest doubt, to march forward to Constantinople. He sent his train of artillery, destined for the siege of this place, by sea, in February 1799; he then divided his army into four divisions, under the command of Kleber, Bon, Regnier, and Lannes. The army proceeded to El-Arisch, where an action was fought in which the French were successful. They then advanced into the fertile plains of Gaza. Having met with little opposition, they moved forward to Jaffa, (the ancient Joppa) a sea-port, on the coast of Palestine. The town of Jaffa was carried by assault, after a vigorous defence, which cost the French one thousand of their men. Numbers of the garrison were put to the sword; but the greater part of them having taken refuge in the mosques, and implored mercy from the French, their lives were spared. But that mercy which the soldiers had



shewn, and cowards had they been if they had acted otherwise, was a stranger to the breast of their inhuman commander. Three days after the place had fallen, Buonaparté reproved his men for their ill-timed lenity, and, being determined, at all events, to relieve himself from the care and support of three thousand eight hundred prisoners, he ordered them to be marched to a rising ground near Jaffa, where a division of French infantry was drawn up in front of them. When the Turks had entered into their fatal alignment, and the mournful preparations were completed, the signal gun fired. Volleys of musquetry and grape shot were instantly played against the wretched victims of this barbarous revenge; and the wretch himself, who had been viewing the scene through a telescope, when he saw the smoke ascending, could not restrain his joy, but broke out into exclamations of applause. Indeed, he had some reason to dread the refusal of his troops to commit this base and cowardly act; for General Kleber had remonstrated, in the most earnest manner, and the Staff Officer, who commanded (for the General, to whom the division belonged, was absent) even refused to execute the orders without a written instruction; but the wily Corsican was too cautious to give such a testimony of his infamy, and,



therefore, sent Berthier to enforce obedience to his orders.

Buonaparté had previously inspected, in person, the whole body of the Turks, amounting to nearly five thousand men, with a view to save those who belonged to the towns which he was proposing to attack. The age and noble countenance of a veteran Janissary attracted his observation, and he said to him, sharply,—“Old man, what business had you here?” The Janissary, undaunted, answered,—“I must answer that question by asking you the same—your answer will be, that you come to serve your Sultan, so did I come to serve mine.” The intrepid frankness of the reply excited universal interest in his favour. Buonaparté was even observed to smile. “He is saved,” whispered some of his Aids-de-Camp. “You know not Buonaparté,” said one who had served with him in Italy, “that smile, I speak from experience, does not proceed from a sentiment of benevolence; remember what I say.” He was right.—The Janissary remained in the ranks, and was murdered with the rest of his countrymen.

Such of the Turks as were not immediately killed by the shot were put to death with the bayonet. Some French officers who were present, and on whose authority these particulars



are related, declared that this was a scene, the recollection of which embittered their lives, and that, accustomed as they had been to acts of cruelty, they could not reflect on it without horror.

These were the prisoners to whom Assalini, in his book on the plague, alludes, when he says, that for three days the Turks shewed no symptoms of that disease, and that it was the putrifying bodies of these murdered captives that produced the pestilential malady which, by a kind of retributive justice, he describes as afterwards making such ravages in the French army. Their bones are still to be seen in heaps, and are shewn to every traveller who visits the place; nor can they be confounded with those of the garrison who perished in the assault, as this scene of butchery is situated at the distance of a mile from the town.\*

\* "Such a fact," says Sir Robert Wilson, from whose useful "*History of the British Expedition to Egypt*" this account is taken; "should not be alledged without some proof, or leading circumstance, stronger than assertion, being produced to support it; but there would be a want of generosity in naming individuals, and branding them to the latest posterity with infamy for obeying a command, when their submission became an act of necessity, since the whole army did not mutiny against the execution; therefore, to establish farther the authenticity of the relation, this only can be men-

*I have  
beheld them  
with my own  
eyes.*



As if Buonaparté were anxious to "Out Herod Herod," in cruelty, and to convince his army that he would suffer no sentiment of humanity, nor yet any feeling of gratitude, to interfere with his interest, or even with his convenience, he followed up this atrocious act by another, which exceeds even the enormities of Robespierre, of Carrier, and of Lebon. Finding that the hospitals at Jaffa were crowded with sick, he sent for a physician, whose name, as Sir Robert Wilson justly observes, ought to be inscribed in letters of gold, but whose personal safety has rendered it necessary to conceal it.—On his arrival, the Corsican entered into a long conversation with him respecting the danger of contagion, which he concluded by observing, that something must be done to remedy the evil, and that the destruction of the sick then in the hospital was the only measure which could be adopted for that purpose. The physician, alarmed at the proposal, bold in the cause of virtue and humanity, remonstrated strongly against the act, and represented the cruelty and atrocity of such a murder; but, finding Buonaparté persisted in his

tioned, that it was Bon's division which fired, and thus every one is afforded an opportunity of satisfying themselves respecting the truth, by inquiring of officers serving in the different brigades composing this division."---P. 74.



wicked purpose, and had even recourse to threats, he indignantly broke from him, and left his tent, with this memorable observation: "Neither my principles, nor the character of my profession; will allow me to become a butcher of human beings; and, General, if such qualities as you insinuate are necessary to form a great man, I thank my God that I do not possess them."

Buonaparté, however, was not to be diverted from his object by any moral considerations, and he found an apothecary who had not the virtue to resist the weight of his authority, (but who has since made some atonement by an unequivocal confession of the fact) and who consented to become the minister of his guilt, and to administer poison to the sick. A sufficient quantity of opium was, accordingly, mixed with pleasant food, of which the unsuspecting victims freely partook; and, in a few hours, five hundred and eighty soldiers, who had suffered so much for the tyrants of their afflicted country, and to gratify the ambition of this guilty Corsican, thus miserably perished by his order.

On the return of Buonaparté from Syria, the same virtuous physician, who had refused to become the instrument of murder, and to destroy those whom it was his duty to protect,



publicly accused the Corsican, before all the members of the institute at Cairo, of high treason against the honour of France, against her children, and against humanity; and he there entered into all the particulars of the poisoning of the sick, and of the massacre of the Turks; and farther charged Buonaparté with having *previously* caused a number of French and Copts, who were infected with the plague, to be strangled at Rosetta; thus proving that this horrible mode of getting rid of his sick was the result of premeditation, and a plan which he wished to introduce into general practice. In vain did the unfeeling Corsican attempt to justify his conduct; the astonished members sate petrified with terror, and almost doubted whether the scene passing before their eyes was not an illusion.\*

\* Sir Robert Wilson's History of the Expedition to Egypt, &c. p. 75, 76.—Buonaparté pleaded, that he ordered the garrison to be destroyed, because he had not provisions to maintain them, or strength enough to guard them; and that it was evident, if they escaped, they would act against the French, since among the prisoners were five hundred of the garrison of El-Arisch, who had promised not to serve again; (they had been compelled, in passing through Jaffa, by the Commandant to serve) and that he destroyed the sick to prevent contagion, and save them from falling into the hands of the Turks. But these arguments, however specious, were immediately refuted; and Buonaparté was at last obliged to rest



When we read of the cruelties of a Caligula and a Nero; when we trace the atrocities of a Louis the Eleventh, and of a Charles the Ninth; when we contemplate the character of our Third Richard, as delineated by the pencil of our great dramatic bard; we revolt with horror from the black catalogue of their crimes, and devote their guilty perpetrators to the execration of our latest posterity. How, then, does it happen, that enormities such as Napoleone Buonaparté has committed, enormities never surpassed, and seldom equalled, by those of the gloomy tyrants of former ages, can be viewed by numbers, not only without similar emotions, but with indifference, and, not unfrequently, with complacency? How happens it that, with every feature of meanness, duplicity, and fraud, in his character; with every ferocious and sanguinary quality that ever disgraced a human being; with a mind harbouring all that leads to acts which render men objects of reprobation and disgust; with a heart cherishing every evil propensity, and distinguished by no one generous or humane

his defence on the authority of Machiavel. On his departure from Egypt, the Savans were so angry at being left behind, to pursue their scientific researches, that they elected the Physician to be President of the Institute, an act which spoke for itself.—

Idem. Ibid.



feeling; this foul regicide, whose tears are those of the crocodile, and whose smile is death, can be considered by any one, endowed with the faculties of an intellectual being, as a *great man*? The sentiment which dictates a decision so revoltingly unjust, so grossly repugnant to common sense, bespeaks a dreadful perversion of the human mind; while the assertion exhibits a shameless prostitution of terms of applause. This can arise only from the silent progress of the monstrous principles of the new philosophy, which deaden the moral feeling, produce a morbid apathy of character, and disqualify the mind for the reception of any social, of any good, or salutary, impression. Some features of the character which Guicciardini has ascribed to Pope Leo the Tenth, are as applicable to Buonaparté as if he had really sat for the picture himself.—“*Costumi oscenissimi, non sincerità, non vergogna, non verita, non fede, non religione, avarizia insaziabile, AMBIZIONE IMMODERATA, CRU-  
DETTA PIU CHE BARBARA.*”

Yet has a member of the British Senate not scrupled to assert, that we should speak of this man only with the respect due to the sovereign of an independent state, without expressing any disapprobation of his character, or any abhorrence of his crimes. If this doc-



trine were sound and true, our speech should not be the expression of our sentiments; our words should not be influenced by a regard to truth; we should become the worst of hypocrites, by arraying vice in the garb of virtue; and the world would be deprived of all the benefits which are to be derived from the salutary dread and horror which a just representation of criminal actions is calculated to afford. Nay, according to this principle, the crimes of usurpers ought not to be recorded in the page of history, and posterity is to lose one of the most useful and instructive lessons which history can impart! But, with the historian of the Egyptian expedition, we will hope, "that in no country will there be found *another* man of such Machiavelian principles, as by sophistry to palliate these transactions; nor must the judgment abuse itself by bringing to recollection the horrors of the French Revolution, and thus diminishing the force of those crimes by the frequency of equal guilt in France, during her contest for liberty or slavery."

During his stay at Jaffa, Buonaparté sent a second letter to Ghezzar Pacha, announcing his intention of marching to Acra, boasting of his own mercy, and blasphemously observing, that, as God granted him victory, "he would, *like him*, be clement and merciful." He renewed



his offers of friendship to Ghezzar, provided he would not oppose him, and sent him a passport to repair to the French head-quarters. Ghezzar, however, was too wise to fall into such a snare; he sent a laconic answer to the Corsican, and told him he might proceed to Acra as soon as he pleased.

Buonaparté, accordingly, advanced to Acra, and, on the eighteenth of March, established his camp upon an eminence, at a small distance from the feeble walls of the place. Ghezzar, who was fully aware of his movements, had, on his departure from Jaffa, apprized Sir Sidney Smith, who was cruising on the coast, and with whom he had established a previous communication, of the approach of the enemy. And, with that promptitude, energy, and dispatch, which so peculiarly mark the conduct of this naval hero, Sir Sidney hastened to his relief, and arrived at Acra two days before the French. His presence gave fresh spirits to the Pacha, and his troops, who determined to defend the town to the last extremity, and the English officers and men, employed the short interval, before the arrival of the enemy, in putting the place in a better state of defence.

The advanced guard of the French was discovered at the foot of Mount Carmel, in



the night of the 17th of March, by the guard boats of the Tigre, the ship which bore Sir Sidney's flag. These troops, not expecting to find a naval force, of any description, on the Syrian coast, took up their ground close to the water-side, and were, consequently, exposed to the fire of grape-shot from the boats, which put them to the rout the instant it opened upon them, and compelled them to retire, with precipitation, up the side of the hill. The main body of the army, finding the road between the sea and Mount Carmel thus exposed, advanced by the road of Nazareth, and invested the town of Acra to the East, but not without being much harassed by the Samaritan Arabs, who were even more inimical to the French than the Egyptians were, and better armed. As the French returned the British fire only with musquetry, it became evident to Sir Sidney that they had not brought cannon with them, which were, therefore, to be expected by sea; and measures were taken, accordingly, for intercepting them. The flotilla, which conveyed them, was soon discovered from the Tigre, consisting of a corvette, and nine sail of gun vessels, very near the shore. On seeing the British ships, the French immediately hauled off, but they were instantly perceived, and seven of them, having on board the whole of the battering



train of artillery, ammunition, and other necessary implements for the siege of Acra, fell into the hands of the English. These cannon were particularly serviceable for the defence of the place which they had been destined to attack, and they were applied, without delay, to that purpose. The prizes, too, were anchored off the town, manned with English sailors, and immediately employed in harassing the enemy's posts, impeding his approaches, and covering the ships' boats which were sent further in shore, to cut off his supplies of provisions conveyed coastways.

The French, deprived of these supplies, brought thirty pieces of artillery from Jaffa, and, in spite of the most vigorous resistance, succeeded in carrying their trenches to within half a musquet-shot of the ditch of the place. On the thirteenth of March, having effected a breach in the wall, on the north-east part of the town, they made an attempt to take it by assault, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Between this time and the second of May, no less than four similar attempts were made, but they all proved equally fruitless. The Tigre, moored on one side, and the Theseus, on the other, flanked the town walls; while the gun-boats, launches, and other rowing boats, did the same by the enemy's trenches, and destroyed



numbers of their men. In order to increase the means of annoyance, two ravelins were run out on each side of the enemy's nearest approach, by the crews of the Tigre and Theseus, under the superintendence and direction of Colonel Phelipeaux, an emigrant officer of engineers, of great abilities, who had accompanied Sir Sidney Smith on this expedition. This gallant gentleman, unfortunately, fell a victim to his zeal; for the fatigue which he endured, in providing for the defence of Acra, produced a fever, which soon deprived him of life. The Turks afforded essential assistance in this dangerous service; they fetched the gabions, fascines, and other materials, necessary for the construction of the ravelins, and which the garrison could not supply, from the face of the enemy's works, setting fire to what they could not take away. The enemy, however, were equally vigilant and active, since they repaired, in the night, all the injury which they sustained in the day, and continued within half pistol-shot of the walls, in spite of the constant fire kept up from the ramparts. The garrison, meanwhile, made frequent sallies, which greatly increased the loss of the French, whose dead bodies nearly filled the ditch.

The defence of Acra, even, for the time which it had already continued, in the weak



state of the fortifications, with the feeble garrison which it contained, would have been impracticable without the incessant exertions of the British seamen and marines, and the persevering spirit of their gallant commander. A large reinforcement of Turkish troops, which had long been expected, at last arrived, on the eighth of May, which was the fifty-first day of this memorable siege. The approach of this additional force was the signal to Buonaparté for a most vigorous and obstinate assault, in hopes to get possession of the town before the reinforcement to the garrison could land.

The constant fire of the besiegers was suddenly increased in a tenfold degree, while the flanking fire from the British vessels was, as usual, plied to the utmost, but with less effect than heretofore, as the enemy had thrown up epaulements and traverses of sufficient thickness to afford him protection. Two guns, however, a French brass eighteen-pounder in the Light-House Castle, under the direction of a petty officer of the *Theseus*; and a twenty-four pounder in the north ravelin, under the direction of a midshipman of the *Tigre*, and both worked by English sailors, played on the enemy with considerable effect. These guns, being within the reach of grape-shot from the head of the attacking column, added to the



Turkish musquetry, did great execution. Two sixty-eight pound carronades, also, under the carpenter of the Tigre, mounted on two germes lying in the mole, threw shells into the centre of the column, with evident effect, and checked it considerably. Still, regardless of lives, the enemy gained ground, and made a lodgment in the second story of the north-east tower, the upper part being entirely battered down, and the ruins in the ditch forming an ascent by which they mounted. At break of day, the French flag was discovered flying on the outer angle of the tower. The fire of the besieged was much slackened, in comparison with that of the besiegers, and the British flanking-fire had become of less effect, as the enemy had covered themselves in this lodgment, and the approach to it, by two traverses across the ditch, which they had constructed under the fire which had been opposed to them during the whole night, and which were now seen composed of sand bags, and the bodies of their dead built in with them, their bayonets being only visible above them. The Turkish troops, which had just arrived under Hassan Bey, were, at this time, in the boats, but not more than half way between the ships and the shore. This was a most critical point of the contest;



and an effort became necessary to preserve the place till their arrival.

That effort Sir Sidney Smith resolved to make. He accordingly landed the boats at the mole, and led the crews up to the breach, armed with pikes. The enthusiastic gratitude of the Turks, men, women, and children, at the sight of this seasonable reinforcement, exceeded the powers of description. Many fugitives returned with this little band to the breach, which was defended by a few brave Turks, whose most destructive missile weapons were heavy stones, which, striking the assailants on the head, overthrew the foremost down the slope, and impeded the progress of those behind. A succession, however, ascended to the assault, the heap of ruins between the two parties serving as a breast-work for both; the muzzles of their musquets touching, and the spear-heads of the standards locked. Ghezzar Pacha, hearing the English were on the breach, quitted his station, where, according to the ancient Turkish custom, he was sitting to reward such as should bring him the heads of the enemy, and distributing musquet cartridges with his own hands. The brave old man going behind the English pulled them down with violence, observing that, if any harm should happen to his English friends, all would be



lost. This honourable and friendly struggle, for the privilege of defending the breach, brought a number of Turks to the spot, by whose assistance time was gained for the arrival of the first body of Hassan Bey's troops. Another difficulty now arose, from the Pacha's repugnance to admit any troops, but his Albanians, into the garden of the Seraglio, which had become a very important post, as occupying the terre-plein of the rampart. There were not above two hundred of these Albanians, who were, originally, a thousand strong, left; a force utterly inadequate to the defence of the post. There was not a moment to be lost; and Sir Sidney Smith's presence of mind removed this extraordinary obstacle; for the Grand Seignior had placed under his immediate command the Chifflic regiment of one thousand men, armed with bayonets, disciplined after the European method, under Sultan Selim's own eye; and these the Pacha had no objection to introduce into his garden. The garrison, animated by the appearance of so powerful a reinforcement, pressed forward to the scene of action; and there being consequently enough to defend the breach, Sir Sidney proposed to the Pacha to get rid of the objects of his jealousy, by opening the gates to let them pass. The Pacha readily complied, and Sir Sidney gave directions



to the Colonel to get possession of the enemy's third parallel, or nearest trench, and there to fortify himself by shifting the parapet outwards. This order being clearly understood, the gates were opened, and the Turks rushed out; but they were unequal to such an attempt, and were driven back to the town with loss.

This sortie had the good effect of obliging the enemy to expose themselves above the parapets, so that the flanking-fire of the English brought down numbers of them, and drew their force from the breach, when the small number remaining on the lodgment were killed, or dispersed, by the few remaining hand grenades, thrown by a midshipman of the *Theseus*. The enemy began a new breach, by an incessant fire directed to the southward of the lodgment, every shot knocking down whole sheets of wall much less solid than that of the tower, on which they had expended so much time and ammunition.

The group of French Generals and Aids-de-Camp, which the shells, from the two sixty-eight pounders had frequently dispersed, was now assembled on an eminence, called Richard Cœur de Lion's Mount. Buonaparté was there distinguished in the centre of a circle; his gesticulations indicated a renewal of the attack, and the circumstance of his dispatch-



ing an Aid-de-Camp to the camp, shewed that he waited only for a reinforcement. Sir Sidney, therefore, gave immediate directions for Hassan Bey's ships to take their station in shoal water to the southward, and made the Tigre's signal to weigh, and join the Theseus to the northward. A little before sun-set, a massive column appeared advancing to the breach with a slow and solemn step. The Pacha suggested the idea of not disputing the breach at this time, but rather to let a certain number of the enemy in, and then close with them, according to the Turkish mode of war. The column thus mounted the breach without molestation, and descended from the rampart into the Pacha's garden, where the Turks employed the sabres and daggers with which they were armed, one of either in each hand, with such effects, that, in a very few minutes, the bravest and most advanced among them lay headless corpses; the rest retreated precipitately; and the commanding officer, General Lasne, was carried off, wounded by a musquet shot. General Rombaud was killed. Much confusion arose in the town from the actual entry of the enemy, as it would have been imprudent to give previous information to the inhabitants of the mode of defence adopted, lest the enemy should have come to a



knowledge of it by means of their numerous emissaries.

During this contest, which lasted five and twenty hours, the surrounding hills were crowded with an immense multitude of spectators, who only waited to see how it would terminate, to join the conquerors. Had Buonaparté's fortune prevailed, the reinforcement which he then would have obtained, might have enabled him to pursue his schemes of conquest, and, as Sir Sidney Smith observed, Constantinople, and even Vienna, must have felt the shock.

Conceiving that the ideas which the Syrians had been led to entertain of the supposed irresistible prowess of the invaders must be changed, since they had witnessed the check which the besieging army daily sustained in their operations before the town of Acra, Sir Sidney Smith wrote a circular letter to the princes and chiefs of the Christians of Mount Lebanon, and also to the Sheiks of the Druses, recalling them to a sense of their duty, and engaging them to cut off the supplies for the French camp. He sent them, at the same time, a copy of Buonaparté's impious proclamation, accompanied by a suitable exhortation, calling upon them to choose between the friendship of a Christian Knight, and that of an unprincipled renegado. This letter had the desired effect; they immediately sent two am-



bassadors to Sir Sidney, not only with professions of friendship, but with offers of obedience; assuring him that, in proof of the latter, they had sent out parties to arrest such of the mountaineers, as should be found carrying wine and gunpowder to the French camp, and placing eighty prisoners of that description at his disposal. Sir Sidney had thus the satisfaction to find Buonaparté's career further to the northward effectually stopped by a warlike people, inhabiting an impenetrable country. General Kleber's division which had been sent eastward, towards the fords of the Jordan, to oppose the Damascus army, was recalled from thence to take its turn in the daily efforts to mount the breach at Acra, in which every other division in succession had failed, with the loss of their bravest men, and three-fourths of their officers. Much was expected by this division, as it had, by its firmness, and the steady front which it opposed, in the form of a hollow square, kept upwards of ten thousand men in check during a whole day, in the plain between Nazareth and Mount Tabor, till Buonaparté arrived with his horse-artillery, and extricated his troops, dispersing the multitude of irregular cavalry, by which they were completely surrounded.

The Turkish Chifflic regiment, having been censured for the ill success of their sally, and



for their unsteadiness in the attack of the garden, made a fresh sally the next night; Soloman Aga, the Lieutenant-Colonel, being determined to retrieve the honour of his regiment by a punctual obedience of the orders which he had received from Sir Sidney, to make himself master of the enemy's third parallel. This he accomplished most effectually; but the impetuosity of a few of his followers carried them on to the second trench, where they lost some of their standards, though they spiked four guns, before they retreated. Thus Kleber's division, instead of mounting the breach, according to Buonaparté's intention, was obliged to spend its time and its strength in the recovery of those works, in which it succeeded, after a conflict of three hours, leaving every thing as it was before, the loss of men excepted, which was very considerable on both sides. In these assaults, the French Adjutant-General, Foulcr, Venaux, commander of a brigade, and General Bon, besides a great number of Field Officers, were killed.

After this failure, the French Grenadiers absolutely refused to mount the breach any more over the putrid bodies of their unburied companions, sacrificed, in former attacks, by Buonaparté's impatience and precipitation, which led him to commit such palpable errors as even seamen could take advantage of. He seemed to



have no principle of action but that of pressing forward; and appeared ready to make every sacrifice to obtain the object of his ambition; although it was evident to every body else, that, even if he had succeeded in taking the town, the fire from the shipping must have driven him out of it again in a short time. The garrison, however, apprized of the inhuman massacre at Jaffa, were rendered desperate in their personal defence.

Such was the rage of the French at the effective assistance which Sir Sidney Smith, and his little band of gallant seamen, had afforded to the Turks, that they made two attempts to assassinate him. And these having failed, they had recourse to a most flagrant breach of every law of honour and of war. A flag of truce was sent into the town by the hand of an Arab dervise, with a letter to the Pacha, proposing a cessation of arms for the purpose of burying the dead bodies, the stench from which had become intolerable, and threatened the destruction of both parties, many having died delirious within a few hours after being seized with the first symptoms of infection. This proposal was listened to with pleasure, and during the conference no thoughts of hostility, of course, were entertained.

While the answer was under consideration,



a volley of shot and shells, on a sudden, announced an assault, which, however, the garrison was ready to receive, and the assailants only contributed to increase the number of the dead bodies in question, to the eternal disgrace of the general who, thus disloyally, sacrificed them. Sir Sidney Smith saved the life of the Arab from the effect of the indignation of the Turks, and took him on board the Tigre, whence he sent him back to Buonaparté with a message which made the army ashamed of having been exposed to such a merited reproof. Subordination was now at an end, and all hopes of success having vanished, the French had no alternative left but a precipitate retreat, which was put in execution, on the night of the 20th of May. Their cannon was embarked in the country vessels at Jaffa to be conveyed coastways, together with the worst among the two thousand wounded who embarrassed the march of the army. These vessels, being hurried to sea without seamen to navigate them, and the wounded being in want of every necessary, even water and provisions, (for Buonaparté, wanting only to get rid of them, cared not what became of them) steered straight to the English ships, in full confidence of receiving those succours of humanity from an enemy, which had been barbarously withheld from them by their own commander. Nor



were they disappointed in their expectation. The expressions of gratitude which these unfortunate men used for the kind treatment which they experienced, were mingled with execrations on the name of their general, who had, as they said, thus exposed them to peril, rather than fairly and honourably renew the intercourse with the English, which he had broken off by a false and malicious assertion, that Sir Sidney Smith had intentionally exposed the former prisoners to the infection of the plague.\* To the honour of

\* The following address, from Buonaparté to the Chief of the General Staff, contains the scandalous falsehood in question.

“ The Commander of the English squadron before Acra, having had the barbarity to embark on board a vessel which was infected with the plague, the French prisoners taken in two Tartans, laden with ammunition, which he took near Caiffa, in the sortie, which took place on the 18th, having been remarked at the head of the barbarians, and the English flag having been, at the same time, flying over many towers in the place, the barbarous conduct which the besieged displayed, in cutting off the heads of two volunteers who were killed, must be attributed to the English Commander, a conduct which is very opposite to the honours which have been paid to English officers and soldiers found in the field of battle, and to the attention which has been shewn to wounded and to prisoners.

“ The English being those who defend and provision Acra, the horrible conduct of Ghezzar, who caused to be strangled and thrown into water, with their hands tied behind their backs, more than two hundred christians, inhabitants of this country,



the French army be it said, this assertion was not believed by them, and it recoiled on the head of its infamous author. The intention of it was evidently to do away the effect which the proclamation of the Porte began to make on the soldiers, whose eager hands were held above the parapet of their works to receive it when thrown from the breach. Buonaparté could not plead misinformation as his excuse, his aid-de-camp, Mr. Lallemand, having had free intercourse with these prisoners, on board the Tigre, when he went to treat about them; and having been ordered, though too late, not to repeat their expressions of satisfaction at the prospect of going home. It was evident to both armies, that, when a general had recourse to such a shallow, and, at the same time, such a mean, artifice, as a malicious falsehood, all better

among whom was a Secretary of a French Consul, must be equally attributed to this officer, since, from circumstances, the Pacha had found himself entirely dependent upon him.

“ This officer having besides refused to execute any of the articles of exchange established between the two powers, and his proposals, in all the communications which have taken place, and his conduct, since the time he has been cruising here, having been those of a madman, my desire is that you order the different Commanders on the coast to give up all communication with the English fleet, actually cruising in these seas.

“ BUONAPARTE.”



resources were at an end, and the defection among his troops was, consequently, increased to the highest pitch. The utmost disorder was manifested on the retreat of the French, and the whole tract, between Acra and Gaza, was strewn with the dead bodies of those who had sunk under fatigue, or the effect of slight wounds; such as could walk, unfortunately for them, not having been embarked. The rowing gun-boats annoyed the van column of the retreating army in its march along the beach, and the Arabs harassed its rear, when it turned from the shore to avoid their fire. A party of these Arabs went down to the sea-side, where the English boats lay, and touched the British flag, with every token of union and respect.\*

\* I have thought it the more necessary to enter into some detail of this glorious achievement on the part of the gallant defenders of Acra, the particulars of which have been taken, nearly verbatim, from the admirable letters of Sir Sidney Smith, who was master of all the circumstances, who was too intelligent to be misled, and too honourable to mislead; from having found an English historical writer disposed to question the accuracy of Sir Sidney's account, and to give a decided preference to the authorities of *Berthier* and *Regnier*. In the brief account of the revolution at Rome, *Berthier* was proved to have been guilty of the most shameless falsehoods, and of the most fraudulent conduct; and whoever has read *Regnier's* Account of the Campaigns in Egypt, must know him to have most grossly misrepresented many of the leading events, and



The French army, at last, made good their retreat to Cairo, laying waste on the road, every

to have betrayed the most unprincipled disregard of honour, and the most palpable contempt of truth. Were there, then, no circumstances of internal evidence to destroy the credit of the French accounts, the fact alone, of these writers standing convicted of fraud and of falsehood, would be sufficient to give a decided superiority over their evidence, to the testimony of one whose veracity had never been impeached. As to Regnier's book, whoever wishes, without submitting to the trouble of perusing it, to see glaring instances of the qualities which I have ascribed to it, may be satisfied by a reference to Sir Robert Wilson's History of the Expedition to Egypt, and more particularly to his preface.

The writer to whom I have referred, who composed the historical part of the Annual Register for 1799, labours, with a great show of candour, to discredit the testimony of Sir Sidney, and to raise Buonaparté in the estimation of his readers. Even on an occasion, (the siege of Acra) in which he displayed the most consummate ignorance, as a General, this writer discovers, in his conduct, "good *generalship* and *address*;" and Sir Sidney is reproved for the light manner in which he speaks of a man whose "*sound judgment, and uncommon abilities*," appear to have stupified the senses of his historical panegyrist. He even gives Buonaparté credit for the truth of his assertion, that he could have taken Acra in a few more days, but that his army was wanted for more important operations, an assertion so preposterously false and ridiculous, that the merest political infant could not, we should have thought, be deceived by it. But the credulity of this writer extends even farther, and leads him to adopt the ridiculous notion, that, by his expedition to Acra, Buonaparté had accomplished his sole object, which was to prevent an attack upon



district, and destroying every village, that appeared hostile towards them. They reached Cairo on the fourteenth of June.

Egypt, from the side of Syria; and which attack afterwards took place. But if credulity had been the only defect observable in this historical detail of the operations in Syria, I should not have considered it worthy of this lengthened notice. It must be remarked, however, that, with the determined spirit of investigation, for which the writer evidently takes merit to himself, and with all the impartiality which he so strongly professes, he does not take the smallest notice of the atrocious conduct of Buonaparté, in murdering the three thousand eight hundred Turks in cold blood, in the vicinity of Jaffa, and in poisoning his own sick in the hospital of that place. To whatever cause this omission may be ascribed, its effect must be fatal to the credit of the narrative. And thus it is that the sources of historical knowledge are corrupted, and that false impressions are made on the public mind!—As an inexcusable instance of negligence and inattention in the same writer, it must be observed that, in 1798, (p. 123) he makes the French army, which sailed from Toulon for Egypt, amount to “about twenty thousand men,” whereas, in 1799, (p. 6) we find the same army amounting “to near 40,000;” and not a reason is assigned for this difference of statement, nor even one word said about it. To such a chronicler be the grateful task assigned of celebrating “the *virtues*” of a Murat; and to record “the *EGREGIOUS* merit of so *illustrious* an adversary” as Napoleon Buonaparté; and to proclaim, to an admiring world, “that there never was any general, ancient or modern, if we ought not to except Alexander the Great, who so happily united the progress of arms with the advancement of science.”!!!



Buonaparté's attention, after his arrival in India, had been directed to the accomplishment of one essential part of his project—the establishment of a communication and concert with the great enemy of the British government in India, Tippoo Sultaun, for the grand purpose of extirpating the English from their Oriental settlements. He apprized Tippoo of his arrival on the shores of the Red Sea, and requested him to send some confidential person, with whom he might confer on the subject of their mutual plans. Tippoo, too, on his part, had established a close intercourse with Zemaun Shah, a native prince of great power and influence, in order to concert such a formidable attack upon the English as, it was hoped, they would be unable to resist. Mr. Pitt, however, most fortunately for the interests of his country, had placed, at the head of the Indian government, a young nobleman, of a mind possessing, in a peculiar degree, every qualification for a great statesman.—The wisdom, the vigilance, the energy, decision, zeal, resolution, and activity, of Lord Mornington were eminently calculated to meet, and to subdue, those serious dangers which now threatened the subversion of British power in the East.

After his Lordship had removed all the previous difficulties which he had to encounter, he



assembled, with promptitude, a force adequate to the great design which he had formed of curtailng, if not of destroying, the means of annoyance which were possessed by the Sultaun of the Mysore, to a very alarming extent. Being now prepared for attack, he communicated to Tippoo the knowledge which he had acquired of his hostile designs, of his alliance with the French, and of his preparations for war; and offered, if he would forego these projects, which were as hostile to existing treaties, as they were subversive of sound policy and of good faith, he would send an officer to treat with him, for the establishment and preservation of a friendly intercourse between him and the British government. The wily Sultaun sent an equivocal answer to this candid communication, and, while he sought to elude the vigilance of English policy, he hastened his preparations for the destruction of English power. But Lord Mornington was not to be led astray by Indian artifice; equally wise in council, and vigorous in action, he ordered the British army to take the field at the commencement of the year 1799. It was commanded in chief by Lieutenant-General Harris, who, after a series of successful operations, set himself down before the capital of Tippoo's dominions, at the latter end of April, and, on



the last day of that month, began to batter in breach. On the third of May, a practicable breach was effected, and, on the following morning, Seringapatam was taken by assault. Tippoo himself, and several of his chiefs, perished in the action. This splendid achievement afforded the means of consolidating the strength of the British dominion in the East, by annihilating the most dangerous of all the native powers, and by gaining possession of a country, and of fortresses, which, while they increased internal security, supplied a fresh barrier against external attack. The French Directory had thus the mortification of being not only foiled in one of their greatest attempts, but of witnessing the utter extinction of those means and resources by which they hoped to accomplish it. In a word, their friendship proved as fatal to Tippoo, as their enmity had proved to the minor princes of Europe.

After the return of Buonaparté, from Syria to Egypt, the Turkish force made a vain attempt to recover that country from the French. The undisciplined Mussulmans were, after an obstinate action near Aboukir, defeated with great loss, on the 25th of July, and compelled to retire. The Corsican, however, ruminating on his repulse at Acra, where he had, for the first time, experienced defeat and dis-



grace, and fearful that his attempts to impose on his followers, whom, on the present occasion, he had succeeded in persuading, that his expedition to Acra had answered every purpose for which it had been undertaken, and had covered the army with glory, might not always be successful; and looking forward, no doubt, to the day when a British force would again strip his ill-earned laurels from his brow, resolved to repair to a country more congenial with his disposition and pursuits. This resolution to betray his duty, to abandon his post, and to desert those gallant men who had braved every danger, and had faced death and destruction in every form, at his command, was only exceeded in baseness by the mode in which it was accomplished. He left Alexandria on the 23d of August, and, unhappily for Europe, escaped capture, and reached France early in October.

He communicated his intentions to none but those whom he intended to accompany him; he stripped the military chest of the last *sol*; and he left the army in a most deplorable state. He was a *deserter*, too, in every sense of the word; for he left his command without *orders*, and even without *permission*; and had he been tried by the articles of war, then in force in every country of Europe, France herself not



excepted, he must have been found guilty, and have suffered an ignominious death, as a deserter! And yet has this criminal found advocates, and eulogists, in this free country, where honour, justice, morals, and religion, are respected. But let one of his own Generals describe the state in which he left his army.

“ I shall say but little to you,” says Gen. Dugua to Barras, the Director, writing from Cairo on the 13th of October, 1799, “ on the departure of the general. It was only communicated to those who were to accompany him. It was precipitated. The army was thirteen days without a commander in chief. There was not a sol in any of the military chests; no part of the service arranged; the enemy, scarcely retired from Aboukir, was still before Damietta. Such was our situation at Cairo, from the 18th of August,” (Buonaparté sailed from Alexandria on the 23d) “ to the 30th. I confess to you, Citizen Director, that I could never have believed that General Buonaparté would abandon us in the condition in which we were; without money, without powder, without ball, and one part of the soldiers without arms. Alexandria is a vast entrenched camp, which the expedition into Syria has deprived of a considerable portion of the heavy artillery necessary for its defence.



Lesbé, near Damietta, is scarcely walled in ; part of the wall of El-Arisch is tumbling of itself. Debts to an enormous amount ; more than a third of the army destroyed by the plague, the dysentery, by ophthalmia, and by the war ; that which remains almost naked ; and the enemy but eight days march from us ! Whatever may be told you at Paris, this description is but too true ; you know me to be incapable of imposing on you by a false one."

This account of Dugua's is confirmed by the representations of Kleber, Poussielgue, and others, contained in the collection of intercepted letters which were printed in London, and which supply a most important mass of authentic information for the historian. Buonaparté, in his address to the army, on the day of his departure, and which was not delivered till he had sailed, impudently and falsely ascribes his return to France to the news which he had received (through some newspapers which accidentally fell into his hands) from Europe. This address contained as many lies as lines. He said it grieved him "to the heart to part from the brave men to whom he was so tenderly attached ;" but it would "be only for an instant ;" whereas this departure had been long premeditated, and he had not the most distant intention of ever returning. In proof of this



fact, it is necessary to adduce the usurper's own authority. In a letter, dated from Cairo on the 28th of July, 1798, not a month after his arrival in Egypt, and addressed to his brother Joseph, he made the following statement:\* "Egypt is the richest country in the world, in wheat, rice, pulse, and cattle. Barbarism is at its height. THERE IS NO MONEY IN THE COUNTRY;† NO,

\* See this letter in the "Copies of Original Letters from the French army in Egypt." Part the Third. p. 158, 159.

† The observations of the editor of the Intercepted Correspondence on this curious instrument are so perfectly just and appropriate, that I cannot do better than lay them before my readers. "THERE IS NO MONEY IN THE COUNTRY! It is worth observation, that this sentence was written the very day after Buonaparté had declared, in his official letters, to all Europe, that, on the bodies of the two thousand Mamelukes, who fell in the "battle of the pyramids," his soldiers had found "20,000,000 of livres," (about 880,000*l.* sterling) "in specie!!!

"But this is not all,—it appears from the next line that Egypt was expected to furnish money for the troops. This is a precious circumstance, and affords matter for deep reflection. Buonaparté left France, perhaps, without a single day's pay for his army. The plunder of Malta, except a few ingots that were distributed amongst the merchants of Alexandria, with a view of being speedily reclaimed, was on board the *L'Orient*; and with the expected treasures of Cairo, and the grand caravan, was, undoubtedly, destined to swell the private fortunes of the general and his confidants; while the troops were to be left, as in Suabia and Franconia, and Brabant and Holland, and Italy and



NOT EVEN TO PAY THE TROOPS. I THINK OF BEING IN FRANCE IN TWO MONTHS. Take your measures so that I may have a country seat at my arrival, either in the neighbourhood of Paris, or in Burgundy; I RECKON ON PASSING THE WINTER THERE."

In his letter to Kleber, announcing his departure, and resigning to him the command of the army, Buonaparté observes to him, "No one has better means of judging of the importance of Egypt to France than yourself. The Turkish empire, menaced with ruin on every side, is crumbling to pieces at this moment; the evacuation of Egypt, on our part, would be so much the more unfortunate, as we should be sure to see, ere long, this fine province fall into the hands of some other European power." Aware, however, of the impossibility of retrieving Egypt without reinforcements, which could not be received while England was mistress of the ocean, he advises Kleber to enter into a negotiation with the Turks, adding, "*adhere strenuously and constantly to the assertion which I have advanced, that France never had the least idea of*

Switzerland, to support themselves, by wresting from the inhabitants, who are thus, in mockery, made 'free, and prosperous, and happy,' the miserable reliques of the rapacity of the officers, and the agents of government!"—*Copies of Original Letters, &c. Part the Second*, p. 100, 101. Note.



## TAKING EGYPT FROM THE GRAND SEIGNIOR."

Kleber was equally aware, with Buonaparté, of the value of Egypt to France. In his letter to the Directory, in which he fully exposes the false statements of the Corsican, respecting the state of the army, and the means of defence, he says, "I know all the importance of the possession of Egypt. I used to say in Europe, that this country was for France the point of fixture, by means of which she might move at will the commercial system of every quarter of the globe; but to do this effectually, a powerful lever is required, and that lever is a navy. OURS HAS EXISTED. Since that period, every thing has changed; and peace with the Porte is, in my opinion, the only expedient that holds out to us a method of fairly getting rid of an enterprise no longer capable of attaining the object for which it was undertaken."

Kleber had more knowledge than Buonaparté, and much greater integrity. *His* object was to make a real peace with the Turks, and not to deceive them, by the detestable duplicity and deception which the Corsican recommended to be practised upon them. Poussielgue, however, whom Buonaparté had appointed Chancellor of *his* Exchequer in Egypt, seems to have possessed much the same spirit as his patron. In a letter to Merlin, one of the



Directory, he recommends peace with England and the Porte, as no purpose could be answered by continuing the war, "*and no inconvenience sustained by adjourning our claims to a happier period.* At all events, IT IS INDISPENSABLE TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS IN THE MOST EARNEST MANNER WITH THE ENGLISH AND THE PORTE, EVEN IF NO OTHER ADVANTAGE SHOULD RESULT FROM THEM THAN GAINING TIME, AND GIVING OFFENCE TO RUSSIA."

Buonaparté, in the instructions which he left with Kleber, in which he adverted to the state of the country, had said, "Alexandria and El-Arisch are the two keys of Egypt;" on which assertion Kleber observes to the Directory, "El-Arisch is a paltry fort, four days journey in the desert; the prodigious difficulty of victualling it will not allow of its being garrisoned by more than two hundred and fifty men. Six hundred Mamelukes and Arabs might, whenever they pleased, cut off all communication with Gatiez; and as, when Buonaparté left us, this garrison had but a fortnight's provision in advance, just that space of time, and no more, would be sufficient to compel it to capitulate without firing a shot. The Arabs alone were capable of furnishing regular convoys of provisions through these burning deserts; but they have been so often



overreached and defrauded, that, far from offering us their services, they now keep aloof, and conceal themselves; besides, the arrival of the Grand Vizier, who inflames their fanaticism, and overwhelms them with presents, will equally tend to incline them to desert us.\*

This account of the wretched state of a place which Buonaparté styled one of the two keys of Egypt, was confirmed by another general officer, Dugua, whose letter has been quoted before; and, it has been truly remarked, it bears hard either on the veracity or on the military skill of the Corsican. The latter (of the former there are no doubts) has long been somewhat problematical; and the attentive readers of the intercepted correspondence could not think more highly of it than Kleber and Dugua appeared to do.

While these scenes of treachery, fraud, and violence, were exhibiting in Egypt, the French were endeavouring to play a similar game in Europe. The Congress at Rastadt had been terminated in the Spring of 1799. By the treaty between Russia, Austria, and Great Britain, it had been stipulated, that an auxiliary force of twenty-three thousand men

\* Intercepted Letters from Egypt. *Part the Third.*  
P. 46.



should be immediately supplied by the first of these powers to the second. The approach of these troops gave umbrage to the French Directory, who insisted that the Emperor should give immediate orders for putting a stop to their progress, and for sending them back to their own country. With this peremptory demand the Austrian Cabinet, of course, refused to comply. The Directory, therefore, by one of those scandalous breaches of good faith which had become familiar to them, without any previous notice, or any declaration of war, ordered their Generals, Jourdan and Massena, to make an incursion into Suabia, and the country of the Grisons. When the Directory thus ventured to renew the war, their force was greatly inferior to what it had been in former campaigns. Their immense losses, combined with other causes, had left them but 320,000 French troops on the Continent of Europe, which, with about 80,000 auxiliaries, or rather tributaries, of the different countries which they had subjugated, or, in their own jargon, *restored to liberty*, they hoped would suffice, not only to ensure all their conquests from the Texel to the Bay of Naples, but to enable them to add to the number.

Of these troops, about 45,000, under Massena, occupied Switzerland and the left



bank of the Rhine, from its source to Basil. Between Basil and Dusseldorf, 65,000 men were stationed under Jourdan, and were called the army of Mentz. The same plan of operations was now to be attempted which had failed in former campaigns;—to unite the armies of Italy and Germany, and to invade the hereditary states of the House of Austria.

The Austrian army opposed to this force amounted to 185,000 men, of whom about 60,000 were now in Italy, in the Friuli, and in Caramthia; 60,000, under the Archduke Charles, were stationed on the Lech; 20,000 were in the palatinate, and the neighbouring districts, under General Sztaray; the same number in the Voralberg and the Grisons, with General Hotze; and 25,000 were on the frontiers of the Grisons, and in the Tyrol, commanded by General Bellegarde. The commencement of hostilities by the French was preceded, as usual, by proclamations, replete with falsehoods, both from the Directory and from their Generals.

Massena's division obtained some advantage in the Grisons, and in the Tyrol; but nothing of a serious nature took place till the 21st of March, when, as the army of Jourdan, then in Suabia, and posted upon the two small rivers Asch and Ostrach, meditated an attack



on the Archduke Charles, who was opposed to him, he was anticipated by the Austrians. A sharp action ensued, during which the French were driven from one position to another; and the Archduke was preparing, with his wonted activity and perseverance, to pursue his advantage, when the close of day compelled him to postpone all farther operations till the ensuing morning. Jourdan, however, deemed it prudent to decamp in the night, and contriving to fall back for two successive days, he established himself, on the third, in a stronger position, with his right at Hohen-Tweil, his centre in front of Engen, and his left upon the heights of Tuttlingen, near the Danube. A corps on the other side of the Danube was stationed near Freadingen. The Archduke's vanguard had pursued Jourdan, and that Prince followed in person, and on the 22d of March, took up his head-quarters at Pfullendorf. Continuing to advance, the Archduke came up with the enemy on the 24th, and, having driven in several of their posts, established himself in the rear of Stockach. In this position Jourdan, anxious to effect a junction with Massena, beyond the lake of Constance, resolved to attack the Austrian army, on the 24th. At the beginning of the day he gained some advantages, and there was



a point of time at which victory seemed within his grasp, but the skilful manœuvres of the Archduke restored the fortune of the day, and at length enabled him to repulse the French in every quarter. This battle was most obstinately contested; and the loss on both sides was great,—that of the Austrians exceeding 3,000, and that of the French amounting to 6,000. Jourdan made another vain attack the next day, but retreated in the night of the 26th. The Archduke pursued him, and, by the middle of April, he succeeded in driving the greater part of the French army out of Suabia. Jourdan was soon after recalled.

Massena, meanwhile, had made a desperate effort to expel the Austrians from the Voralberg. On the 23d of March he attacked the strong position of Feldkirch, but, notwithstanding his great superiority of numbers, he paid for his temerity with three thousand of his men. The Archduke's operations were now to be directed against Switzerland, which country, it was hoped, might be rescued from the intolerable yoke which had been recently imposed on it. On the 13th of April, he drove the French out of Schaffhausen, where the celebrated bridge was burnt by them in their retreat, to the great regret of the surrounding country. In a few days, the other posts which they



occupied, on the right bank of the Rhine, were forced; when that river now became the line of division between the hostile armies.

By the middle of May, after several sharp actions, the Austrian Generals, Bellegarde and Hotze, had succeeded in expelling the French from the Grisons; when the former of these officers repaired to Italy. The war in Switzerland was continued by General Hotze, with whom the Archduke soon effected a junction. Massena, who had succeeded Jourdan in the chief command of the French army, was opposed to him. On the 27th of May, the Archduke defeated the French at Winterthur, and compelled them to fall back upon a strong position at Zurich. In another quarter the Austrians, under General Haddick, were equally successful in driving the French out of the Italian Bailiwicks, from the upper valley of the Ticino, and from the important passage of Mount St. Gothard.

The position which Massena had taken up in front of Zurich was exceedingly strong, both by nature and art. It was necessary, however, that the Archduke should drive him from it, or else forego all further attempts on the country which he had promised to rescue from oppression. On the third of June, he caused the right of the French to be attacked



by his vanguard, which drove them from the villages which they occupied. But the grand attack was reserved for the next day. After a dreadful conflict, which lasted from morning till night, the Austrians succeeded in forcing the first line of the French entrenchments.— But they could proceed no farther; the redoubt and abattis, still to be carried, being rendered impenetrable by the numbers and fire of the battalions and batteries with which they were lined. Here, however, they passed the night; the Archduke resolving to renew the attack the following morning. But his troops were so fatigued by their continued exertions for so many hours, that he was obliged to postpone it to the following day. Fortunately he was spared that trouble, for Massena, alarmed, no doubt at the resolution which he had displayed, and at a perseverance which astonished him, decamped in the night of the fifth of June, and abandoned a position from which it would have been extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to drive him. The loss was considerable, on both sides, in these two actions. The French Generals, Cherin, Oudinot, and Humbert, were wounded; the first, mortally.— The Austrian Generals, Hotze, Wallis, and Hiller, were also wounded. Massena retired to another strong position, on a chain of mountains,



between the Limmatt and the Reuss. Here the Archduke did not feel himself in sufficient force to attack him, and both armies remained nearly in the same position, till the middle of August.

While the French were thus defeated in Germany, and held in check, at least, in Switzerland, they were destined to experience a reverse of fortune more decided, and disasters more serious, in a country which had, hitherto, formed the principal theatre of their military triumphs. The French army, in Italy, was now commanded by Scherer, who had resigned his post of War Minister in order to place himself at the head of it. He was stationed, at the opening of the campaign, on the Mincio, while the Austrians, under General Kray, occupied a nearly parallel line on the Adige. By a mistaken policy, the Austrian Cabinet had resolved, in order to avoid the charge of aggression, not to strike the first blow, and they thus left to the enemy the inestimable advantage of choosing both time and place for the commencement of hostilities. As soon, then, as Scherer was apprized of the progress of Jourdan and Massena, the former of whom was stationed, with his left, on the Danube, and his right on the Lake of Constance, while the latter was in possession of the whole of the



country of the Grisons, and had even penetrated into the Tyrol, he resolved to open the campaign. He advanced, in six divisions, containing about 45,000 men in the whole. The left, commanded by Moreau, attacked the right wing of the Austrians, and drove them from their posts, between the Lake of Garda and the Adige; carried the entrenched camp of Pastrengo, where they killed and took 2,500 men, and, pursuing their advantage, followed the Austrians over the river, and, extending themselves, as well towards Verona as towards the Tyrol, cut off the communication which the Austrians had established between the Upper and the Lower Adige. The centre of the French army, led by Scherer himself, attacked the chain of posts which covered Verona, the pillage of which city had been promised to the army, in public orders, to satisfy them for the arrears of pay due to them. Scherer, however, found in General Kaim an opponent not much disposed to facilitate his schemes of plunder;—he experienced, in short, a resistance which set all his efforts at defiance, and, after fighting the whole day, with the loss of nearly 3,000 men, on either side, he could succeed in wresting from the Austrians only one of their positions, that of St. Lucia. During this time, the right of the French, which was ordered to



attack and to burn the town of Leguag , where the Austrian advanced posts were stationed, were completely repulsed by General Kray ; and, after losing 2,000 men in killed and wounded, with 600 prisoners, 11 pieces of cannon, and thirty-two tumbrils, having one General killed and another wounded, fled, with precipitation, to Mantua. The defeat, however, of his right wing, induced the Austrian General to desist from the pursuit, and to reinforce the right of the centre division. The two armies now lay so near to each other, that, on the 29th of March, they were under the mutual necessity of concluding a suspension of arms, for the purpose of burying their dead, which had remained on the field since the battle of the 26th.

Two hours before this truce expired, on the 30th, 10,000 men of Moreau's division, led by General Serrurier, passed the Adige at Polo, and advanced to within half a league of Verona. Here, however, they were attacked by a part of General Kray's force, detached for the purpose, with such spirit that they were soon compelled to retreat towards the bridge over which they had passed. The Austrians, however, pursued them with such rapidity as to cut off one of their columns, and to take 2,000 prisoners.

In these first seven days of the campaign,



the French are stated to have lost the immense number of 10,000 men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners;—while the loss of the Austrians is calculated at about 5,000. The French were so dispirited by this unsuccessful beginning, that, on the 2d of April, 190 of their soldiers, and 23 officers, laid down their arms, at Villa Franca, to seventeen Austrian light-horse;\* and the number that deserted was considerable.

Scherer, who knew that the Russian auxiliaries, under Suwarrow, were advancing, by rapid marches, to the scene of action, determined to risk another battle before their arrival. The Austrians, who had now passed the Adige, had equally resolved to attack the French, and to carry, if possible, their camp at Magnano. The fifth of April was the day fixed on by both for their grand attack; as they both advanced towards the same point, they soon met, and, by ten in the morning, the action had become general through the whole extent of the front of the line. For the first two hours the French had the advantage, and General Serrurier got possession of Villa Franca, where he maintained himself. The centre and the right of the French pushed on to the neighbourhood of Verona. But the timely arrival of nine battalions of the

\* History of the Campaign of 1799, in Italy. P.22.



Austrian reserve, under General Latterman, turned the tide of victory, and soon put the French to flight. Scherer and Moreau exerted themselves to the utmost, to make an impression on the centre of the Austrians, in the hope of securing the advantage which had been lost, and they succeeded, at first, in compelling General Kaim to retreat to within half a league of Verona. Here, however, three battalions of grenadiers, under General Lusignan, forming the remainder of the Austrian reserve, arrived in time to give effectual support to their retiring comrades. The French were now compelled to retreat in their turn, and, being completely broken, were closely pursued by the Austrians, till the approach of night. The French, on this day, lost 6,500 men, of whom 3,000 were prisoners; with 17 pieces of cannon. Several of their Generals were wounded, and one, Pigeon, mortally. The number of the Austrians, killed and wounded, amounted to about 2,500; among the latter were three of their Generals, Mercantin, Kowasewich, and Ross.

Scherer, after this defeat, retreated beyond the Mincio, and first took up a position between that river and Goito. But some further successes, gained by detached corps of the Austrians, under Generals Klenau and Wukassowich; together with the spirit displayed by the



Italians, who, encouraged by the disasters of their enemies, had risen, in many places, and cut down the poisonous Tree of Liberty, induced Scherer to retreat still further; and he accordingly retired by Arola, behind the Chiesa, thus leaving the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera to their fate.

On the 8th of April General Melas reached Italy, and took upon him the chief command, which, however, he only retained till the 16th, when he resigned it to Marshal Suworow, who had then arrived with about 20,000 Russians. The united army amounted to 60,000 men, exclusive of the small corps detached upon the flanks. Leaving a sufficient number of troops, about 20,000, to blockade Peschiera and Mantua, the Russian commander advanced, on the 20th, in pursuit of the flying enemy, who retreated towards Piedmont, as well to secure the fortresses in that country, as to draw nearer the reinforcements which he expected from France and Switzerland. Scherer, however, was soon stripped of his command, which was given to Moreau. This General resolved to make a stand upon the Adda; but the allies having contrived to gain possession of a flying bridge, in the night of the 26th, which the French had neglected to guard with a sufficient force; and having established another, a part of their army passed



over the river, and took an advantageous position at Brivio, an important point, situated at the end of the road leading from Milan to the lake of Como. Part of the centre of the allies crossed the Adda, fell upon General Serrurier's division, and drove it from St. Gervasso to Pozzo. These movements brought on a battle, which was fought between Brivio and Pozzo. The French were defeated, and the next day the allies entered Milan. Serrurier's corps was afterwards pursued by General Wukassowich, who compelled them, to the number of 3,000 men, to lay down their arms, after a brave, but ineffectual, resistance. These actions cost the French 5,000 men, in prisoners, and 4,000 killed and wounded; the loss of the allies amounted to near 3000 men. They took from the French thirty-two pieces of cannon, on the field of battle, and a much greater number at Milan.

The total loss of the French, from the commencement of the campaign in Italy was estimated at 30,000 men, so that Moreau had little more than 25,000 left to oppose to the victorious allies. He now fell back on the Po, and fixed his head quarters at Turin, where he repaired the fortifications of the citadel. Still, however, he resolved to dispute the possession of Italy with the allies, and for that purpose took a position extending from Alexandria, and the Tanaro, to



Valentia and the Po. Marshal Suworow, having left 4,000 men, under General Latterman, to blockade the castle of Milan, pursued the French at the beginning of May. Moreau seemed resolved not to abandon the advantageous position which he occupied; while the commander of the allies, not deeming it advisable to attack it in front, determined to harass the flanks. This movement occasioned some partial actions, and, at length, obliged Moreau, at the expiration of a fortnight, to quit his post, to leave behind him the whole plain of Piedmont, and to remove his head-quarters to Coni.

Suworow now pushed forward, and, on the 25th of May, encamped within a league of Turin. The next day the allies obtained possession of that city, the garrison having retired to the citadel. During this time, Moreau had been waiting in impatient expectation of being joined by General Macdonald, who had been ordered to quit his station in the kingdom of Naples, and to reinforce the army of Italy. Macdonald had traversed the intermediate country between Naples and Tuscany, with little molestation, and, at the latter end of May, proposed to effect the desired junction, on the banks of the Po. His army amounted to 25,000 men; and, if it could join Moreau, would enable him to make a stand against the allies, if not to



resume offensive operations. Moreau, on his part, made the necessary movements to favour this attempt. Macdonald, whose army had now been strengthened by the addition of a corps under General Victor, put his troops in motion on the eighth of June. On the tenth, a partial action took place, to the disadvantage of the French; but on the 12th, the superiority of their numbers over the corps of General Hohenzollern, which was opposed to them, prevailed; and, after a desperate battle, in which the French General Forest was killed, and Macdonald himself wounded, the Austrians retired behind the Po, and joined the corps there stationed with General Kray. On the 15th of June Macdonald's army arrived at Piacenza. On the 17th he marched against General Ott, who, being greatly inferior in numbers, had continued to retire slowly before him; he came up with the advanced posts of the Austrians, beyond the little river Tidone; and while he was engaged in skirmishing with them, Marshal Suworow, who had left Turin on the 12th, and Alexandria on the 15th, with about 20,000 men, arrived. The French were then repulsed, and lost a great number of men. The next day the two armies were again partially engaged, and the French were again beat. But, on the 19th, Macdonald, whose army



was still equal to that of the allies, resolved to make a general attack on them. He paid dearly however, for the attempt, for he was repulsed on all sides, and compelled to seek for safety in flight. He decamped in the night, and was briskly pursued, the next day, by the allies; the Russians overtook his rear-guard at Zena, and forced it to lay down its arms; while the Austrians were equally successful in the vicinity of Piacenza, where they made several thousand prisoners, among whom were four wounded Generals, Rusca, Salm, Olivier, and Chambrai.

In these four days, Macdonald had lost 4,000 men killed, and at least 10,000 prisoners, many of whom were wounded. That General continued his retreat, not without further loss, and measured back his steps to Tuscany. Moreau, meantime, had advanced with about 20,000 men; had raised the siege of Tortona, and had defeated the Austrian division under General Bellegarde; but, being unable to extend his operations, he retired, and established himself in the gorges of the Appenines. The citadel of Turin, meanwhile, surrendered to the allies, after a siege of eight days.

Marshal Suworow was now enabled to unite the different divisions of his army, and, having been joined by some considerable reinforcements, he found himself, at the end of



June, at the head of 90,000 men, with which he projected the recovery of Tuscany, and the reduction of Mantua, Tortona, and Alexandria. To this army the French had not more than 45,000 men to oppose, independent of the garrisons of these three fortresses. Macdonald, aware of his perilous situation, did not wait to be attacked, but, evacuating Tuscany, at length succeeded in joining Moreau. The attention of the allies, in the month of July, was principally directed to the siege of those towns which the French still occupied in Italy. These were pushed on with vigour. On the 21st they obtained possession of Alexandria, the garrison of which were made prisoners of war. On the 30th of that month, Mantua, with a garrison of 8,700 men, opened her gates to the besiegers, after the trenches had been opened only fourteen days.

It would be foreign from the purpose, and greatly exceed the limits, of an historical sketch, to follow such a general as Marshal Suworow, through all the rapid and masterly movements of one of the most astonishing campaigns of which history affords an example. This narrative, therefore, must be confined to a brief notice of the remaini operations of the hostile armies. In August, Joubert, who had been appointed to supersede Moreau, assembled



his troops, to the number of near 40,000, for the purpose of raising the siege of Tortona, which had not yet surrendered to the allies. Suworrow resolved to wait for them in the plain between the Scrivia and the Bormuda, where Joubert proposed to attack them on the 14th of August; but, having altered his intentions, and being loth to abandon an advantageous post which he occupied on the neighbouring hills, Suworrow, impatient of delay, and little accustomed to temporize, resolved to attack him in his post. Accordingly, at five in the morning of the 15th, Generals Kray and Bellegarde marched against the left of the French army, where Joubert commanded in person. The contest was maintained with the most determined courage, on both sides. About an hour after it began, Joubert was killed by a musquet ball; but still the French, rendered bold by the strength of their position, and the entrenchments which they had thrown up, defended themselves most resolutely, and defeated every attempt to dislodge them.

At nine o'clock, Suworrow, with his Russians, about 13,000 in number, attacked in front the position of Novi; but the extreme steepness of the mountains, and the destructive fire which the French, in security themselves, were able to keep up against them, rendered unavail-



ing the desperate intrepidity of his infantry, who were repulsed with a heavy loss. At eleven, the whole French line preserved its station unbroken and unmoved; it looked down, in conscious security, from its almost inaccessible heights, and seemed to bid defiance to the enemy below. But Suworow was not to be discouraged by difficulties however formidable, nor yet by checks, however severe. There fresh attacks were made in the course of the afternoon, but still with no better success than the first. When the day was far advanced, the Austrian General, Melas, who commanded one division of the allies, by a masterly movement, attained the object which every attempt to accomplish had hitherto proved fruitless. He marched up the left bank of the Scrivia, sent a detachment across the river to keep a French column in check, and so manœuvred as to outflank the right wing of the enemy's main army. This brought on an engagement, in which, after some hard fighting, the Austrians forced the central position of the French at Novi. The flight of the enemy was intercepted by the Prince of Lichtenstein, and the greater part of their rear guard was cut off. The French, in this action, lost 8000 men, killed and wounded, 4,000 prisoners, and 32 pieces of cannon. That



of the allies amounted to 7,000, of which six hundred only were made prisoners.

After the battle of Novi, Moreau retreated into the Genoese territory, and the garrison of Tortona engaged to surrender if not relieved by the 8th of September. The plan of operations originally determined on by the Cabinet of Vienna, was, that as soon as Marshal Suworow should be able to leave Italy in safety, he should repair to Switzerland, where, joining the Austrians to be left there by the Archduke Charles, and a large body of Russians, which arrived about the middle of August, he should endeavour to complete the conquest of that country; that, while the Marshal should be thus engaged in the centre, the Archduke, on the right, should attempt some important enterprize on the Rhine; and that, on the left, the Austrian corps, stationed in the Duchy of Aosta, and on the frontier of Le Valais, should make an active diversion, while the army of General Melas should keep in check the French force under Championnet and Moreau, in the maritime and French Alps.

The moment for carrying this plan into execution had now arrived, and Suworow, who had received orders to this effect, towards the end of August, prepared to obey them as soon as he should have opened the gates of Tortona.



to the Austrians. As soon as this event took place, he set out with his Russians, now reduced to about 17,000 men, from Asti, and directed his course towards Novarra and the Italian bailiwicks. He marched with such rapidity, that, in five days, he advanced one hundred and sixteen miles, and reached Taverna, near Bellinzona, on the 15th of September. Here he was promised that horses and mules should be ready for him to transport his baggage across the mountains; but, through the gross neglect of the Austrian Generals, on whom the execution of these promises depended, or else from a cause still more dishonourable, nothing was prepared for him. This occasioned a fatal delay of three days, passed in vain endeavours to procure horses; and he was, at last, reduced to the necessity of dismounting his Cossacks, and of employing their horses to transport his baggage. On the 24th, he reached Mount St. Gothard, where he found the first post of the French, who were immediately driven in by some Austrian light troops, who had joined the Marshal, under the gallant Colonel Strauch. On the 25th, the Russian army traversed the valley of the Reuss, and arrived in the evening beyond Wasen. On the 27th, he pushed his advanced guard across the Culmerberg, as far as Mutton, where he received a dispatch from



the Austrian General, Lincken, who had been destined to co-operate with him, apprizing him of the events which had recently occurred in Switzerland, and which entirely frustrated the whole expedition.

The Russian General, Korsakow, who was destined to reinforce Suworow, in Switzerland, had entered that country, with an army of 28,000 men, including the emigrants under the Prince of Conde, about the middle of August, and immediately advanced to the Archduke's camp before Zurich. By this junction the allies became greatly superior to the French, and were, indeed, perfectly competent to the accomplishment of the grand object of the campaign in this quarter, the recovery of Switzerland from the French, and the extension of hostilities to the very frontiers of France. The Russian Commander, Korsakow, accordingly pressed the Archduke to attack Massena without delay.—But, by a crooked and mysterious policy, the object of which it is not easy to conjecture, the Austrian Cabinet, to its eternal disgrace be it recorded, had restrained the Archduke, by secret orders, from pursuing the very plan which had been previously concerted. That Prince, therefore, instead of acceding to the proposal of Korsakow, drew off 30,000 of his troops, with which he returned to Germany,



under the pretence of checking the incursions of the French, who had made an irruption into that country. He left, however, 20,000 men under General Hotze, whose head-quarters were at Kaltsbrun; and the Russians took possession of the camp before Zurich. Massena, who was apprized of the approach of Suworow, resolved to make a grand attack on the allies before the Marshal could reach the scene of action. This took place on the 25th of September. Unfortunately, the brave General Hotze was killed early in the day, as he was employed in reconnoitring the enemy; and, Korsakow, and his Russians, after performing prodigies of valour, sustained a total defeat, and were compelled to retreat beyond the Rhine.

This was the discouraging account which Suworow now received; an account which marred all his hopes, and frustrated all his plans. In this dilemma, he resolved to pass by the vallies of Mutton and Clonthal, into the canton of Glarus, there to join General Lincken; flattering himself that, on the news of his arrival, and of the departure of Massena to engage him, Generals Korsakow and Petrarch might be enabled to retrace their steps, and that every thing might still be retrieved; with this impression he wrote to the Russian Generals in Korsakow's army:—" You will answer with



your heads for every farther step that you retreat; I am coming to repair your faults."

Massena, finding Suworow in this forlorn situation, looked on him as a certain prize, and disposed his army in such a manner as to intercept his progress, and to prevent his intended junction with the Austrian General. But, notwithstanding the vast superiority of his force, he found the task he had undertaken most difficult to execute. Instead of crushing Suworow at a blow, as he had expected, he paid dearly for the attempt, and was constantly defeated in every attack which he made on the Russians, on their march. Suworow, after encountering incredible difficulties, subduing the greatest obstacles, and sustaining the most incessant fatigue, made good his retreat, and reached the valley of the Rhine, with 14,000 of his brave and hardy followers.

Thus, by the mistaken and despicable policy of the House of Austria, was one of the noblest projects for the emancipation of Europe from French tyranny, which the wisdom of man could have formed, frustrated, at the very moment when success was within the grasp of those who had undertaken its accomplishment. This admirable plan of operations had been settled by the British and Russian Cabinets, with the approbation of Austria; it had for its



object the expulsion of the French from the whole of Italy, Piedmont, Switzerland, and Holland; and the transfer of the seat of war to the frontiers of their own country. It was a plan, grand in conception, and displaying the combined talents of the Statesman and the General. It appeared, indeed, too vast and gigantic for execution; but the events which it produced sufficiently demonstrated the adequacy of the means employed for the purpose, while they proved that, though it ultimately failed, its failure was solely imputable to the want of will, and not to the want of power, to render it successful. In the Neapolitan dominions, the inhabitants, protected by the British fleet, and headed by a patriotic Cardinal, Ruffo, wrested the capital of their country from the usurped authority of its foreign enemies; and the French were ultimately compelled to evacuate the kingdom. Tuscany also was delivered from her oppressors, and the power of her lawful Sovereign restored. Every where, the people, secured from danger by the triumph of the allies, displayed their enmity to the French, and rose in arms against them; the strongest fortresses were reduced; the most powerful armies defeated; and the discomfited and dispirited foe was compelled to seek for shelter and for safety in the



deep recesses of the Alps and the Appenines. A great portion of Switzerland was recovered; and the country of William Tell was on the eve of witnessing the joyful restoration of her liberties and laws. A force adequate to the final accomplishment of this desirable event was collected on the spot. The allies were in possession of the most advantageous posts; and nothing but the word of command was wanting to hurl destruction on the fell destroyers of Helvetic freedom. It must not be pretended, then, that the plan of the combined powers was either rashly conceived, or impracticable to execute. Had the Archduke Charles been left to exercise his own judgment, and to act according to his own discretion, the glory which had signalized the progress of this brilliant campaign would have continued to mark its termination. But, unfortunately for the interests of Europe, and the welfare of the civilized world, he was subject to the influence and direction of a Cabinet, which was swayed by other motives than those which it thought proper to avow; and his military operations were controlled by the decisions of an Aulic Council, which, remote from the scene of action, decided on the course of events, and left the commander of the army no power to profit by occurrences as they arose. These



circumstances are sufficient to account for the otherwise unaccountable conduct of the Austrian General; to whose unseasonable departure from Switzerland the disastrous issue of the campaign was exclusively imputable.

One part of this plan, the recovery of Holland, it was left to the English to execute. The force destined for this expedition consisted of about 33,000 men, including a body of Russians, and the whole was to be placed under the command of the Duke of York. The first division of this army, commanded by Sir Ralph Abercrombie, sailed from Deal, with a naval force under Admiral Mitchell, on the 13th of August. The wind, which was fair at first, became variable, and violent gales ensued, so that the transports did not reach the Dutch coast till the 20th, when they were becalmed. The military and naval commanders now went on board Lord Duncan's ship, and concerted their plan of attack against the Helder and the Zuyder-Zee, and ten sail of the line were detached from the main fleet, and entrusted to Admiral Mitchell, for executing the naval part of the intended operations. Preparations were made for landing the army on the 22d; but, most unfortunately, the wind suddenly changed, and continued to blow with great and unabated violence till the evening of the 25th. By the



delay thus occasioned, the enemy, who had, at first, only 1300 men at the Helder, had time to collect a powerful force to oppose the landing of the troops, which did not take place till the 27th. The Dutch General, Daendels, had now assembled upwards of ten thousand men, between the Helder and Haarlem, upon a line of about thirty-six miles in extent. The English, however, succeeded in landing, in the morning of the 27th, and, having drawn up on the shore, repulsed several attacks which the enemy made on them in the course of the day. The action lasted, with some intervals of repose, from five in the morning till four in the afternoon. It cost the Dutch 1400 men, killed, wounded, and taken, including thirty-seven officers; while the English had 50 killed, three of whom were officers, 371 wounded, and 26 missing. The Dutch General evacuated the posts of the Helder on the succeeding day, and left Sir Ralph Abercrombie at liberty to land his artillery, and to complete his preparations for advancing into the country. On the 28th, General Don's division, consisting of 5000 men, reached the Dutch coast, and joined the army. During these occurrences on shore, Admiral Mitchell entered the Texel, and summoned the Dutch fleet to surrender to the Prince of Orange. After some hesitation,



Admiral Story, seeing no prospect of a successful resistance, consented to yield, and the Orange flag was hoisted on board his ships. Thus was the last blow given to the Dutch navy; and a very important part of the expedition completed without the loss of a single man.

On the first of September, General Abercrombie took a more advanced position, from which Daendels had previously retired; but in the interval a body of French troops had arrived at Alkmaar, and General Brune had taken the command of the united army of Dutch and French, which amounted to about 20,000, and was in daily expectation of farther reinforcements. Brune, knowing the actual superiority of his own force, resolved to make a general attack on the English before the remainder of their troops should arrive. This accordingly took place, at break of day, on the 10th of September; but the enemy met with so warm a reception, that, after losing 2000 men, of whom 1200 were French, they retired with precipitation, from every point, at 10 o'clock. The loss of the English in this action amounted to seventy-seven, of whom thirty-four were killed, and the rest wounded or taken. General Abercrombie preserved the position which he had so ably defended, till the arrival of the remainder of the army, which disembarked



on the 12th, 14th, and 15th of September. The Duke of York having, by this time, reached Holland, now took the command of the united army of British and Russians, amounting to 33,000 men, of whom 1200 were cavalry.

The delays which had already taken place had a material effect on the ultimate success of the expedition, while it rendered it absolutely necessary to lose no farther time, but to commence the military operations without delay. On the 19th the allies resolved to attack the enemy's chain of posts, and the necessary dispositions were made for that purpose. But the imprudent courage of the Russians, who formed the right column of the army, in advancing two hours before the appointed time, in the dark, and pushing on, in the most brave, but most irregular, manner, equally regardless of danger and of order, rendered the successful attacks of the other columns of no avail, and defeated the whole plan. After suffering considerably by their rashness, they were compelled to retreat, neither could they be prevailed on to return, when the Duke of York had, by carrying several posts in their rear, secured them from farther attack, and supplied the means of turning the fortune of the day. After displaying the greatest bravery, the whole army were, by this inconsiderate conduct, obliged to return to the posi-



tion which they had occupied the preceding night. The English lost, on this occasion, one thousand and six men; 117, including 5 officers, were killed; the loss of the Russians amounted to 2970, of whom 1225 were prisoners. The loss of the enemy was still more considerable, as no less than three thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the British. The Russian Generals, Hermann and Soutchoff, were wounded; and General Gerebzeff was killed.\* It was now pretty evident that the opportunity for making any material impression had been suffered to escape. The French received daily reinforcements, and had sufficient time to increase their means of attack and of defence; while the country, from being intersected by dykes and canals, was peculiarly unfavourable to an invading army; the people of Holland, too, evinced little or no disposition to render assistance to the allies; and, unlike their ancestors, in former times, whatever might be their sentiments, they preferred the indolence which oppression favours, to the active exertion which

\* General Essen, in his report of this battle to his sovereign, imputes the failure of the attack on the enemy's posts to the circumstance of part of the army having begun to advance *two hours too late*; instead of admitting that it was solely imputable to the disobedience of orders on the part of the Russians, in marching *two hours too soon*.



the restoration of liberty requires. In addition to these disadvantages, of themselves sufficiently formidable, the inclemency of the season, which was particularly wet and stormy, still multiplied their obstacles, and retarded their operations. It was not till the second of October that the army was enabled to move forward. On that day, a plan of attack was formed on a more contracted scale than the former; it was to be confined to the space between the canal of Alkmaar, and to be directed against the left wing of the enemy, which was principally composed of French. As the Duke of York had lately received some reinforcements, which supplied the void occasioned by his late losses, he was enabled to employ 30,000 men upon this service. The Russians, under General Essen, were to act in the centre, and the English on the two wings. The object of the attack was not merely to advance and gain ground, but to cut off a large body of the enemy, and so to weaken the French in particular, as to disable them for taking the field for some time. A severe contest ensued, in which the English maintained their military character, repulsing the enemy in every quarter, and driving them from every position; but the obstinacy of the Russian General, by preventing the complete success of the day, rendered this effusion of blood useless and unavailing. As in



the former action, the Russians, by their imprudent courage, and ill-regulated zeal, had advanced too soon and too far to act in concert with, and to secure support from, the English; so, on the present occasion, as if resolved to avoid the repetition of a similar error, they fell into the opposite extreme. They would not advance one inch, till fully supported by the British divisions; and when the French were driven, about eleven o'clock, from their position between Schorel and Schoreldam, and had retreated to Bergen, the Russians pertinaciously refused to advance any farther, but remained, for the rest of the day, between the two first of these places, keeping up an useless cannonade on the last. The English on the wings, after a sharp and bloody conflict, had carried every thing before them, and now was the time for reaping the fruit of these first advantages; but the obstinate refusal of the Russians to advance, rendered it impracticable to make the projected attack upon Bergen, and to cut off the French column, which was nearly turned, and was hastily retreating. The troops then remaining masters of the field, lay on their arms that night, during which the French evacuated Bergen, and retired to a stronger post in their rear. On this day the English had 237 killed, and 1102 wounded; the Russians lost 170 killed and taken, and 423 wounded. The loss



of the French was estimated at 3000. Sir Ralph Abercrombie had two horses shot under him in the action; Major Lumsdaine of the 55th was killed; and Major General Moore, and Lord Huntley, were among the wounded.

On the 6th, the Duke of York had resolved to advance still further forward, and to make a fresh attack on the enemy, who, on his part, had determined to attack the English. This mutual determination brought on a general action sooner than was intended, which ended like the last, in leaving the English and their allies in the possession of the field, and in expelling the French from some of their posts. But still no decisive advantage was gained; no impression was made on *the country*; the people had not risen against their oppressors; every new victory diminished the allied force, while the loss of the enemy was speedily supplied; and, besides, when driven from one post, he could retreat to another; while the allies could not advance without fighting for every inch of territory. It was evident the force under the Duke of York was utterly inadequate to the conquest of Holland; the season was far advancing; the roads were bad; and, in short, the whole prospect was so discouraging, that it was deemed expedient to abandon the project altogether, and to think of nothing but the means of securing a retreat. In



the evening of the 7th, then in front of Alkmaar, he made a retrograde movement, and reached Zype by day break, leaving behind him only 50 wounded English and Russians, who were not in a state to be removed, and whom General Brune afterwards multiplied into 600. The moment Brune was apprized of the retreat of the allies, he put his army in motion to harass them. On the 10th of October, the Dutch General, Daendels, attacked with vigour the left of the allies; but Prince William of Gloucester, who had the command of it, maintained his position during the greater part of the day, though he had only 1200 men to resist the assaults of 6600 of the enemy. On the 14th, the allies took up the same position which they had occupied on the 2nd; and they adopted every practicable means for giving it additional strength.

That the act of embarking a retreating army in the face of a superior, or even of a formidable, though inferior, force, is one of the most difficult and hazardous of all military operations, it requires no knowledge of the art of war to understand. The situation of the allies, then, was perilous; having abandoned the prospect of conquering Holland, to return to their own country, was now their sole object. The only question left for consideration, then,



was how to embark the army with the greatest practicable security. Here two modes presented themselves; the first arose from the local situation of the army, which left them in possession of the great sea dikes, as well as the interior dikes, and thus enabled them to lay the whole of North Holland under water; they had it also in their power to render the navigation of the Zuyder-zee impracticable. The other mode was, by negotiating with the enemy for leave to evacuate the country without molestation. But the former of these means, it was evident, should have been made subservient to the latter. The allies possessed infinite advantages in the ability to injure the enemy; and the voluntary resignation of such advantages justified the demand for some privilege or benefit in exchange. By the inundation, the country would be rendered useless and desolate for a considerable time; it was, therefore, most decidedly the interest of the French, who derived the sole advantage from its possession, to prevent, by almost any sacrifices, a measure so destructive. They had, independently of the injury which they would themselves sustain, by the loss of contributions and other resources, from the inundation, a farther and a stronger inducement, inasmuch as it was their interest to keep the people whom they held in subjugation in a state



of tranquillity, and nothing could tend more to inflame their minds against the French, than the knowledge that the great losses and inconveniences which they suffered from the inundation had arisen from the obstinacy of the French, in refusing to suffer the allies quietly to evacuate the country; and a free and unconditional evacuation, therefore, was what the English General had a right to command, and what it was the interest of the French General to allow. Such, however, was not the issue of the negotiation which the Duke of York opened with General Brune, through the medium of General Knox, on the 15th of October; and which, after some strange proposals from the French Commander, which he never expected to be admitted, was finally concluded, at Alkmaar, on the 18th of that month. By this convention, the allies obtained permission to evacuate the country on or before the 30th of November, on condition of releasing eight thousand French and Batavian prisoners, to be selected by the two governments, without exchange. The prisoners taken on both sides, during the campaign, were to be exchanged. The army embarked within the limited time; and thus terminated an expedition which had been planned under the most happy auspices, which afforded, in its progress, many oppor-



tunities for the display of British courage, but which ended in disappointment, if not (in respect only of the *terms* of the convention) in disgrace. The force employed was certainly inadequate to the attempt; and the period fixed upon for the execution of the plan was delayed greatly beyond that season when it was most likely, from a combination of various causes, to be productive of success.\*

\* The Dutch Colony of Surinam had, during these transactions, voluntarily surrendered itself, on the 20th of August, to a British force under Lord Hugh Seymour.



## CHAPTER XLV.

French Affairs---Unconstitutional proceedings of the Directory

---They violate the Elective Franchise---Annul the returns of their Opponents in the two Councils---Propose to confiscate the Property of the transported Legislators---Manly speech of Rouchon on the Question---Charges the attempt with exceeding in cruelty the ferocious deeds of Heliogabalus and Nero---Defends the Exiles, on the ground that they had been condemned without Trial---Riot in the Council---Rouchon *hooted out* of the Hall---Proposal of the Directory adopted---False accusations of England by the Directory---Misrepresent the Battle of the Nile---They are hated by the People---Are all turned out of office, except Barras---The Abbè Sieyes one of the new Directory---Forms the plan of a new Revolution---Buonaparté's return to France entirely his own act---Strange conduct of the Directory towards him---Conference between Sieyes, Buonaparté, and Roederer---The Councils removed to Saint Cloud---The command of the armed force given to Buonaparté---Barras resigns his seat in the Directory---Infidelity of the Directorial Guard---Buonaparté enters the Council of Elders---Is questioned as to his views---Reviles the Council---His speech---Remarks on it---He harangues the Troops, and excites them to revolt---Proceedings in the Council of Five Hundred---The members take a new oath of fidelity to the Constitution---Buonaparté enters their Hall---An universal clamour ensues---An attempt is made to stab him with a dagger---He is rescued by the Grenadiers---Conduct of Lucien Buonaparté, President of the



Council of Five Hundred---Speech of Tallot---The Mem-  
 bers are expelled from their Hall by the Troops, with  
 fixed bayonets---The Council of Elders declare them-  
 selves the entire Legislative Body---Memorable speech of  
 Boulay de la Meurthe---The Constitution annihilated, and  
 a Consular Government established---New oath adminis-  
 tered to all Public Officers---Reflections on the constant vio-  
 lation of oaths by the French---Buonaparté made (by him-  
 self) First Consul---Meeting of the British Parliament  
 ---Means taken for recruiting the Army---Supplies voted  
 for Three Months---Parliament adjourned for the Holidays  
 ---Buonaparté's Letter to the King, on the subject of  
 Peace---Supposed object of it---Reasons for doubting the  
 Consul's sincerity---Lord Grenville's answer---The Con-  
 sul's reply---Talleyrand's falsehoods and contradictions  
 confuted by the declarations of his Brother Patriots,  
 Robespierre and Brissot---The subject discussed in Parlia-  
 ment---The Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland defend the  
 First Consul, and arraign the British Ministry---Conduct  
 of the Cabinet supported by Lord Grenville---Debates in  
 the Commons---Address moved by Mr. Dundas---Oppo-  
 sed by Mr. Whitbread---Mr. Whitbread's errors corrected  
 by Mr. Canning---Mr. Erskine condemns the conduct of  
 Ministers---Mr. Pitt's speech---Confutes the arguments of  
 Mr. Erskine --- Takes a comprehensive view of the  
 question of aggression---Shews the arguments of Mr.  
 Erskine to have been extracted from his pamphlet,  
 which had been long since confuted---Mr. Pitt asserts the  
 rigid neutrality of this Country towards France previous to  
 the War---States the causes of the failure of the last nego-  
 tiation---Considers the conduct of France to the Powers of  
 the continent---Describes the ruling principles of the  
 French Revolution---Delineates the Character and Con-  
 duct of Buonaparté---Proves the necessity of entering into  
 his personal character in the present discussion---That



character affords no security for the observance of treaties  
 ---Mr. Pitt combats the objections of Mr. Tierney---Mr. Nicholl's observations on the scarcity of Corn answered by Mr. Pitt---Mr. Pitt justifies the Cabinet against the charge of Inconsistency, in having negotiated in 1797 with France, and in refusing to negotiate at the present moment---He is answered by Mr. Fox---Address, approving of the conduct of Ministers, carried by 265 votes against 64---Subsidy to Foreign Powers---Opposed by Mr. Tierney, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. William Smith---Supported by Mr. Pitt---Granted by the House---Motion for compelling Ministers to open a negotiation with France rejected by both Houses---The Budget---Motions relative to the Dutch Expedition, by Lord Holland, and Mr. Sheridan, negatived---Renewal of the Suspension Bill---Bill for preventing the consumption of New Bread---Sir Henry Mildmay introduced a Bill for preventing British Subjects from taking the veil---Supported by Mr. Pitt---Opposed by Mr. Windham---Observations on the conduct of Mr. Burke's Friends on all subjects relating to the Papists---Bill passes the Commons---Is rejected by the Lords---Bill for preventing the marriage of an Adultress with the object of her criminal Attachment, brought into the Upper House by Lord Auckland---Debate on the subject---The Bill supported by Lord Eldon, Lord Grenville, and most of the Bishops---Opposed by the Duke of Clarence, Lord Westmoreland and Mulgrave---Remarks on an extraordinary passage in a Speech of the Duke of Clarence  
 ---Thoughts on this Discussion.

[1799-1800.] While the French Republic was carrying on a military campaign in Italy, Germany, and Switzerland, with varied success, a political campaign, of still greater con-



sequence, had been opened at Paris and St. Cloud, by the General who had so basely deserted his post in Egypt. During the absence of this man from his adopted country, or rather from the country which, to her sorrow, had adopted him, continual feuds, as might naturally be expected, prevailed both in the legislative councils, and in the Directorial Cabinet of the Republic. In April, 1798, the election of that third of the legislative body which was to be annually renewed took place; and the Directory, conscious that their tyranny, and frequent violations of the law, had rendered them obnoxious to the people, were fearful that the returns would not be such as would be favourable to the stability of their own power. They soon betrayed their fears, and endeavoured, but in vain, to adopt some means for averting the evil which they dreaded to encounter. Not being able to prevent the electors from exercising their rights without having recourse to another massacre of the people, which they deemed too dangerous an experiment, in the present temper of the country, they adopted another measure, equally unconstitutional, and annulled, with the assistance of their creatures in the two councils, all the returns, in seven departments, and further declared the returns of several individual members to be illegal. Their next step was



to violate, or rather to annihilate, what little remained of the freedom of the Press, by the suppression of twelve of the daily papers. All these acts of violence and outrage were committed under pretence that the persons elected in the one instance, and the conductors of the papers in the other, were enemies to the constitution. The next step which these Directorial Sages ascended on the ladder of Terrorism, was the proposal of a law for confiscating the property of the deputies who had been transported to Guiana, in September, 1797, and many of whom had found their way back to Europe;—and for *compelling* them to return to Rochefort, to learn, from the magistrate there, what prison they should be confined in, and to what place they should be again transported for life. This proposal, which was as ludicrous as it was atrocious, was deemed so necessary by the obsequious councils, that they were going to put it to the vote without the smallest discussion of its justice or expediency. One member, Rouchon, the member for Ardèche, in the council of five hundred, had the honesty to reprobate this infamous proposal, and to expose its flagrant injustice in strong and appropriate terms. He stigmatized the attempt to carry it as exceeding, in cruelty, any of the ferocious deeds of Heliogabalus or Nero. The partisans of the Directory



were so enraged at this just representation of the case, that they insisted on committing the unfortunate orator to prison. Rouchon, however, had intrepidity enough, notwithstanding the numerous instances which he had witnessed, in which such a threat had been carried into execution, to continue his truly patriotic harangue. He told the council, that the decree under discussion was more formidable to them, even, than to the proscribed deputies; as it subverted the very foundations of a representative government. He stated, with equal truth, that by the banishment of the deputies to Guiana, they had removed, to a great distance, a number of men whom they considered as dangerous, but that they could not deprive them of their property, as *criminals*, because they had not been brought to trial. It was monstrous, he said, to use the words *justice* and *humanity*, in the same breath with confiscations and proscriptions, without trial or judgment. It was the conduct of a man who grinned while he stabbed his victim. Notwithstanding the violent outcries which these manly observations called forth, Rouchon continued in this strain for some time, and, arguing most logically, remarked, that in no state, subject to laws, was any one held to be a criminal before he had been legally tried and convicted; but the depu-



ties had been banished the year before, without conviction or trial; *therefore*, they were either banished, in violation of the constitution, or there was no constitution to be violated.

The promulgation of these bold truths and manly sentiments created one of those boisterous scenes which were peculiar to the legislative discussions of Republican France. He had continued his speech amidst constant interruptions, and repeated calls for sending him to prison, and for banishing him to Guiana;—and it required no common resolution to face such clamorous opponents, to brave such serious dangers. Yet, alone and unsupported, he remained till the close of the debate, or, more properly speaking, of the clamour; when, finding the council deaf to reason, and blind to truth, he quitted the hall, upon which the whole body of grave legislators waved their hats in the air, and expressed their joy, by tumultuous shouts of exultation!—The discussion was renewed on a subsequent day, when Crochon, member for the department of the Eure, arraigned Rouchon, with great severity, for having the *impudence* to presume that men might be innocent who had not been proved to be guilty. Rouchon, however, contented himself with telling him he was an *ass*. The decree, with all its oppressive



provisions, soon passed, with only six or seven dissentient voices !

The Directory, and the two Councils, spared no efforts to excite a most inveterate prejudice against the English, of whom the most infamous falsehoods were propagated. They were charged with the most cruel treatment of their prisoners, and the assertions in an English paper were adduced in support of the charge ; the utter falsehood of which was demonstrated by the Parliamentary inquiry which took place. When the news of Buonaparté's past successes in Egypt was received at Paris, nothing could exceed the exultation which it excited. The Directory hailed it as the certain presage of the downfall of the British Empire. This joy was a little damped by the destruction of their fleet at Aboukir ; but, for this loss, they soon consoled themselves, by the reflection, that the French had established, beyond all doubt, their superior courage, and that the English were only indebted for their success to the superiority of their numbers. The tyrannical conduct of the Directory, their profligate rapacity, luxury, and wealth, rendered them odious to the great majority of the people ; and created a strong party against them in the two Councils. At the period of election, the 18th of June, 1799,



those republican Sovereigns were stripped of their robes of office; Barras was the only one of them who was suffered to remain in power; and he secured for his associates, Gohier, formerly a lawyer at Rennes, a decided jacobin, who had been appointed Minister of Justice, in 1793, by the National Convention; and who afterwards acted as President of the Criminal Tribunal of the department of the Seine; Roger du Cos, who had been a member of the National Convention, where he voted for the death of the King; President of the Jacobin Club, during the reign of terror; a violent enemy of the Girondists; and who was President of the Council of Elders, when sentence of banishment was pronounced on a number of deputies; and to the part which he played on that occasion, he was principally indebted for his present promotion; Moulin, a Jacobin General, of little repute; and the crafty Abbè Sieyes. The Abbè, indeed, was supposed to be the grand projector of this change in the Government; and it was by his arts that he procured four colleagues to be appointed, from whose abilities, resolution, and character, he could have nothing to fear.

These men had enjoyed their new dignity but little more than three months, when Buonaparté arrived at Frejus, in Provence. Instead



of being received as a deserter who had violated his duty, who ought to be punished for deserting his post in a most disgraceful manner, he was hailed, by the frivolous and inconstant French, as a hero entitled to praise, and deserving of reward. Long before Buonaparté's return to Paris, the wily Sieyes had deeply meditated on a new revolution. He perceived, very clearly, that the Directorial system was radically defective, and that nothing like a solid Government could be formed without an unity of the Executive power. With the same secret zeal, and silent industry, with which he had laboured to vest, in the hands of Robespierre, the power of a Dictator, had he endeavoured, for more than a year, to secure, if possible, for himself, the possession of supreme power. He had, indeed, been aware that his plan could never be successful without the active co-operation of some popular General. And he had fixed his eye upon Joubert, as a proper man for his purpose. But the death of that General rendered it necessary to search for another coadjutor, and he was still in doubt, when the unexpected return of Buonaparté immediately fixed his choice.

It has been supposed, and the supposition has been adopted by some, and converted into certainty by others, that Buonaparté's return from Egypt, at this conjuncture, was the result



of some private information which he had recently received from his brothers, or partisans, in Paris. But there exists not, as far as my researches have enabled me to ascertain the fact, the smallest grounds for such an idea. It has been shewn, indeed, by a letter of his own, that it never was his intention to remain long in Egypt; and it is highly probable that, if he had not been allured by the reported treasures of Ghezzar Pacha, he would have left all the glory to be acquired, by the siege of Acra, to others, and have really passed the winter in either Burgundy, or at Paris. It would appear, that he had received no other intelligence from Europe, than what he collected from the perusal of some German papers which he, accidentally, obtained. The deplorable state of his army, and the impracticability of realizing his ambitious hopes, after the defeat and disgrace which he had experienced at Acra, were, most likely, the immediate causes which hastened his departure from Egypt. Without Buonaparté, then, it is highly probable a similar scene to that which was now exhibited, would have taken place, under the direction of Sieyes, and, possibly, Lucien Buonaparté might have played the principal part.—If so, it is much to be lamented that Buonaparté did not perish in the deserts of Arabia, since his brother, there is reason to believe, would have shuddered to



commit the acts of tyranny, and the atrocious crimes, which have marked every period of the iron reign of Napoleone ; although he did not shrink from the execution of measures without which the opportunity for committing those crimes could not have occurred.

The conduct of the Directory, towards Buonaparté, is utterly unaccountable on any other principle than that of *fear*. If they knew that the army was so devoted to him, as to obey any commands which he might chuse to issue, and dreaded the direction of the military power against themselves, it was natural enough that they should disguise any resentment which they might feel towards him, and treat him with apparent courtesy. But, in this case, they must have been woefully deficient in political skill, and even in common prudence. For, in possession of supreme power, with the leaders of the army attached to them, and certainly not well disposed to Buonaparté, they might easily have prevented all intercourse between the Corsican and the troops, and have been enabled to discharge their duty in safety. What that duty was, stupidity itself could not but perceive. Buonaparté had deserted his post, and returned to France without leave; he was guilty, therefore, of a high military offence; and the Direc-



tory ought to have put him under arrest, the moment they were informed of his arrival, and to have brought him to trial by a court-martial. Such conduct would have been sanctioned by the constitution; and there was little reason to dread any opposition from any quarter; for although Buonaparte has been, most falsely, represented as, at this time, "The idol of France, and the admiration of the world,"\* it is most certain that, had the Directory and the two councils been guided by men of common sense, and of common resolution, in opposing the pretensions, and the efforts, of his partisans, his projects would have been completely defeated, and he would have met that ignominious death which he has so frequently, and so richly, deserved, on a scaffold. Instead, however, of meeting with merited punishment, the assassin experienced unmerited honours; and was destined to act for some time longer, as the scourge of France, and the curse of the civilized world.

Buonaparté and Sieyes had now frequent interviews, to which Rœderer, formerly a judge in the Parliament of Metz, and afterwards one of the firmest adherents to Robespierre, was admitted, as an useful associate, and as an adept in the art

\* Annual Register for 1800. P. 11.



of making revolutions. The members of the two councils, whom Sieyes had engaged in his interest, had frequent secret meetings, at which Lucien Buonaparté presided. There was a power vested in the council of elders, (by the *last* new constitution of the Republic) to change the place of residence for the legislative bodies whenever they thought proper; a provision introduced at the suggestion of the Abbè Sieyes, with a view, as it was afterwards supposed, to some such event as that which was now in contemplation. This power the council resolved to exercise, and, without the smallest communication with the Directory, determined to remove to Saint Cloud, where the scene about to be played, would, it was supposed, experience less interruption, than in the turbulent city of Paris. At the same time, the council conferred the command in chief of the whole military force in and about the capital, on Buonaparté, charging him to see the resolution of the council carried into effect. Thus every thing, so far, answered the views of the conspirators. Barras was persuaded to resign his seat in the Directory, but Gohier and Moulin, who were still in the Directory, sent an order to Lefebvre to surround the House of Buonaparté with a strong detachment of the Directorial guard. Had this order been given on the Corsican's first arrival at Paris, by a



majority of the Directory, and followed by a summary trial, their disgrace might have been prevented; but it was now too late. Lefebvre informed the Directors that he himself was subject to the command of Buonaparté, and they found that their own guard, imitating the conduct of the Commander in Chief, had deserted their post, and joined his standard. Moulin jumped out of a window and escaped; Gohier was put under arrest; and the other Directors vacated their seats. Thus the government was dissolved, and Sieyes was left to produce another new constitution from his well-stored *pigeon-holes*.

The scene which followed, on the removal of the councils to Saint Cloud, beggars all description. While the council of Elders were about to deliberate on the novel situation in which they were placed, Buonaparté suddenly appeared in their hall, attended by a military escort; and, anticipating the power he meant to assume, used to the legislative body the language of a dictator. After he had directed them how to proceed, he concluded his speech, inaptly enough, by declaring himself, "nothing but the devoted arm of the Republic;" to which a shrewd member added, by way of reminding the military protector of the state of his duty, "and of the constitution." This unfortunate addition threw the irritable Corsican off his guard,



and, forgetting that he was speaking to his masters, he, with equal insolence and truth, replied, "the constitution! does it become you to invoke the constitution?—Did you not tread it under foot on the eighteenth of Fructidor, on the twenty-second of Floreal, and the thirtieth of Prairial?—The constitution! is it any thing more than a pretext, and a cloak for all manner of tyranny? The time for putting a period to these disasters is, at length, come. You have charged me to present you with the means. Had I harboured any personal designs, or views of *usurpation*, I should not have waited till this day in order to realize them. Before I left France I was solicited, and since my return, the solicitation has been renewed, by the heads of different parties, to take possession of the public authority. Barras and Moulin proposed to me to seize the government. I could disclose facts which would confound the greater part of my calumniators. All the rights of the people have been atrociously violated; and always under the pretence of a regard for the constitution. It is left to your wisdom, and to your firmness, to re-establish those sacred rights, and to use means for saving the country." When the relative situation, and the past conduct, of this Corsican upstart are considered, it is impossible to decide whether his impudence



or his hypocrisy was most calculated to excite surprize and to rouse indignation. Those very rights of the people of which he now stood forward, as the boastful champion, had, scarcely by any individual, been more grossly violated, than by Napoleone Buonaparté himself. It will be remembered that, in the autumn of 1795, he was the only officer who could be found to head the Conventional troops, when employed for the murderous purpose of opposing the peaceable citizens of Paris, then engaged in the exercise of the most important of their political rights, conferred upon them by the new constitution of that day, the elective franchise. He answered their *claims of right* by the thunder of his cannon; and silenced the voice of patriotism with the sword; and all these murders were committed by him, "*under the pretext of a regard for the constitution.*" Under the same pretext he presided at the murder of the Royalists at Toulon. But, without such pretext, he encouraged every one of the breaches of the constitution, with which he now reproached the councils, which had occurred previous to his embarkation for Egypt, by procuring from his troops a formal sanction, and express approbation, of those proceedings;—and particularly of one of those very revolutionary measures which he now, most hypocritically, stigmatized,



the forcible seizure and banishment of two members of the Directory, and of a considerable number of the legislative body. In short, there was not an act, by which freedom was either secretly undermined, or openly attacked, of which he was not either the projector, or in which he did not bear a principal part.

Irritated at the unexpected opposition which he experienced, for this vain man, though he must have known that he deserved the scaffold, expected every body and every thing, even in his present subordinate situation, to bend to his will, rushed out of the council of Elders, (who had now a full proof of his real views and designs, and who ought, therefore, to have taken him into custody, without a moment's delay) and went to harangue the soldiers and the mob. To the first, the hypocrite said—"Turn your bayonets against me whenever you find me an enemy to liberty." After he had thus sounded the disposition of the people without, he returned to the hall of the elders, and again addressed the assembly:—"It is time to speak out; and I have no design which I wish to keep secret. The constitution, too often violated, is utterly inadequate to the salvation of the people. It is indispensably necessary to have recourse to means proper for carrying into execution *the sacred principles of*



*the sovereignty of the people, civil liberty, and freedom of speech, as of thought; and, in one word, the realization of ideas which have hitherto been only chimerical.*"

During this time the Lower House, or council of five hundred, of which Lucien Buonaparté was President, had met in the Orangery. A motion, certainly both rational and constitutional, in the present extraordinary situation of affairs, was made for a select committee, to be formed for the purpose of making a report on the State of the Nation. This motion was seconded, at the same moment, by several members; and a general exclamation, at the same time, prevailed throughout the hall, of—"the constitution! the constitution or death!—No dictatorship! Down with the Dictators. We are not afraid of the bayonets, we are free!" These feelings were certainly such as might be expected from persons in the situation of the members of that council at the time; and were expressed in a suitable manner; but Lucien Buonaparté, immediately applying the expressions to what he knew to be the real circumstances of the case, exclaimed, with an affected air, "I am too sensible of the dignity of my office, any longer to suffer the insolent threats of certain speakers, I call them to order." As this sagacious president did not pretend to spe-



cify the particular breach of order of which the members whom he reproved, for language, by the bye, perfectly constitutional, and strictly consonant with the oaths which he, as well as they, had taken, the council treated his call with the contempt which it deserved. One of the members, Grandmaison, who represented the department of the Gironde, observed, that it would be as well to enquire what had been done, as what was to be done. To talk of fidelity to the Republic, was, in his mind, at best but equivocal, as it might mean a Republic, such as that of Venice, or of the United States; but the constitution they all understood, and therefore he called upon the council to take a fresh oath of fidelity to the constitution. This manœuvre had been frequently practised before, in the course of the revolution, and generally preceded the destruction of the constitution, an event marked, of course, with an accumulation of perjuries!—Yet, strange to say, this oath was coolly and deliberately taken, by every member, (and the act of administering it took up two hours,) even by those who had entered into the conspiracy, of which Sieyes and Buonaparté were the leaders. While the council was employed in considering who would be a proper successor to Barras, whose resignation had just been sent in, Buonaparté entered the



hall, followed by four grenadiers, while a number of other soldiers, with some general officers, remained at the door.

In the temper of the Council at this moment, it was easy to foresee what the reception of the Corsican would be. An universal uproar immediately ensued, and exclamations were heard on all sides, of—"Who is that?—Who is that?—Sabres here?—Down with the Dictator!" These indications of discontent were not, as usual, confined to words, for a great portion of the members instantly rushed from their seats, seized the little Corsican by the collar, shook him, and dragged him towards the door. The moment was critical, the culprit's courage forsook him; he trembled for his fate; and a dagger, aimed at his breast, (although, unfortunately for the repose of Europe, it missed its aim) completed his consternation. The blow might, probably, have been repeated, had not Lefebvre, most opportunely, rushed into the hall, and rescued the culprit from the rage of the Council. Many of the Members severely reprov'd the officers and soldiers who thus dared to interrupt their deliberations, and violate the sacred seat of Legislative wisdom. After much noise and altercation, the President, who had viewed this scene with great anxiety and alarm, succeeded, at length, in obtaining a hearing,—



when he admitted, that “the commotion which had taken place was natural, and that the feelings of the Council, on what had just passed, were in unison with his own. But, after all, it was equally natural to suppose that the General, in the step he had taken, had no other object in view than to give an account of the state of affairs, or to communicate something or other interesting to the public; at any rate, he did not think that any member of that assembly should harbour any injurious suspicions.” This ridiculous observation called forth various remarks from the indignant members of the Council;—one said, “Buonaparté has this day sullied his glory;”—a second exclaimed, “Buonaparté has conducted himself like a King;”—and a third demanded that “Buonaparté be called to the bar to answer for his conduct.” Lucien, now sinking the President in the brother, quitted the chair, which was immediately taken by Chazal.

A warm debate ensued, in which Tallot took a distinguished part. Adverting to the sudden removal of the Councils to Saint Cloud, he observed, that the Elders, in adopting so extraordinary and hasty a measure, did not intend that they should carry on their deliberations in a prison, and at the point of bayonets.—“What! the representatives of the French



people in a village surrounded by a military force, and that not at their disposal! Not that I am afraid of these soldiers. They have fought for liberty; they are our relations, our children. But this I declare, that yesterday the Constitution suffered violence. The Council of Elders had no right to appoint a General; Buonaparté had no right to enter our hall without orders; that is the truth;— as for you, you cannot long give your free votes in your present position.” He concluded with a motion, that the Council of Elders should be requested to send the Legislative Body back to Paris. This motion was generally approved, though feebly opposed by two or three Members. Lucien Buonaparté requested, that before they adopted such a motion, the General should be called to hear what he had to alledge in his own defence. Lucien was now requested to re-assume his office of President, and, as he testified some reluctance to comply with this request, those who had urged it used the decisive argument of a pistol, which they presented to his breast, to compel his acquiescence. The party of grenadiers, who were upon the *Qui vive*, at the door, fearing his life was in danger, pressed forward, rescued him from the imaginary peril, and conveyed him to his brother.

Napoleone had been employed, for some



time, in the honourable task of exciting the Directorial guard to mutiny against their masters. He talked loudly of himself, and of the dangers he had just escaped; he, whom the combined Kings of Europe had not been able to reach with their armies, was, at this moment, threatened with outlawry, by factious assassins. The soldiers seemed very well disposed to listen to him, and this disposition was strengthened\* by the arrival of his brother Lucien, who, having quitted the Hall, now mounted a horse, and, in his turn, harangued the troops. He told them, with the same assurance, and the same falsehood, which had marked his brother's address, that a great majority of the Council was, at that moment, under the influence of terror, from a few members armed with poni-

\* An English writer, describing this event, states, that the mutinous disposition of the soldiers, on this occasion, was "in some measure *legalized* by the presence of the President." Strange ideas of *law*, surely, must such a man have! According to this doctrine, if any popular General were to surround the House of Commons with troops, for the purpose of overawing their deliberations, and of expelling them, by force, from their seats, and the Speaker should prove to be as factiously inclined as the troops themselves, and should accordingly join and encourage them, his presence would afford a legal sanction to their rebellious and traitorous proceedings! And this is one of the writers, who calls himself a *Whig*, and who professes himself to be the champion of liberty!



ards, who besieged the Tribune, and threatened their colleagues with death; that these ruffians had put themselves in a state of rebellion against the Council of Elders, and had dared to threaten the General, who was ordered to carry the decree for transferring the legislative body to Saint Cloud into execution.—But it was themselves, he said, who had become outlaws by their furious attempts against the liberty of the Councils. He called upon the soldiers to deliver the majority of the Council from the oppression under which they laboured, in order that they might deliberate peaceably (*at the point of the bayonet*) on the destiny of the Republic.—“General, and you soldiers,” said this worthy President of a legislative body; “you will not acknowledge, as legislators of France, any other than such as shall rally around me. Those ruffians are no longer the representatives of the people, but the representatives of the poniard.” This precious harangue was calculated to rouse the drooping spirits, and to fix the wavering resolution, of the Corsican, whose presence of mind, and whose courage, which have been so loudly vaunted by his stupid admirers, had nearly forsaken him, and who, but for the advice and assistance of his brother, would have sunk in an attempt,



equally beyond his mental resolution and his corporeal fortitude. He instantly ordered the troops to march against the council; and they accordingly entered the hall with fixed bayonets. An officer of cavalry then said,—“ Citizen representatives, there is no longer any safety for you in this place; I advise you to withdraw.” Instead of complying, the members, as well “ the ruffians” as “ the majority under the influence of terror,” exclaimed, “ *Vive la Republique!*” The *military* ruffian, who commanded the grenadiers, then mounted the tribune, and said, very sternly,—“ Representatives, withdraw; *it is the order of the General.*” Still the members kept their seats; and one of them began to expostulate with the soldiers on the impropriety of their conduct; when an officer called out, “ Grenadiers, forward!” the drums then beat, and the members were literally turned out of the hall, by these armed sovereigns.

To crown this disgraceful scene, the Council of Elders resolved that they now constituted the complete legislative body of the republic, though, as if to shew the nullity of their own resolutions, they agreed that it would be proper to assemble, in the evening, the few members of the Council of Five Hundred, who still remained at St. Cloud. These accordingly



met, with Lucien Buonaparté at their head, and were base enough to pass a formal vote of thanks to the whole tribe of rebel officers and troops, with Napoleone at their head, who had, that morning, violated the legislative sanctuary, and driven the legal representatives of the people from their seats, by brutal force. Lucien then made a long and stupid declamation, in which he descanted vehemently on principles, and sufficiently proved that he had no principle himself. He drew, however, a most gloomy picture of the Republic, and completely falsified every assertion which the admirers of French principles had advanced, respecting the excellence, and the advantages, of a revolutionary government. He shewed it, indeed, to be pregnant with every evil; to be stained with blood and corruption; and to be adequate to no one purpose of social comfort, or of national prosperity. Boulay de la Meurthe, a member of the same faction, did not scruple to declare, that *the revolution which had just taken place* had been for some time concerted. It was intended, however, to be effected only by *moral and constitutional means*,—the same means which had, in fact, been employed in the Council of Elders; in other words, by intrigue, corruption, and intimidation, and not by force. But, he said, the fury



and madness of a violent faction in the Council of Five Hundred,—that is, the faction which would neither be corrupted nor intimidated,—which had been their torment for a long time, had obstructed the progress of moral and constitutional influence, in their assembly. This faction had set its face against all free discussion, and, by its tyrannical conduct, had compelled the well-intentioned majority to quit the place of their meeting. The Council of the real representatives of the people had been dissolved by their violence, and converted into an unconstitutional and seditious mob; and the French legislature and the nation must have experienced all the horrors of a civil war, had it not been *for the firmness and the foresight* of him whom the law had vested with the power of maintaining order in the present great moment. This species of revolutionary logic, which converted the duty of preserving the Directory and the Legislative Bodies from all insult and violence, and for protecting them against every invasion of their rights and independence, for that was the duty, and the sole duty, of the commander of the Directorial guard, into a right to exercise violence against them, to destroy their rights, and to rob them of their power, was such as neither this man nor any other would have dared to employ, unless the



assembly had been wholly composed of the same miserable tools of faction as himself. In his long speech, however, he exhibited a pretty correct view of the republican government, to which he ascribed every kind of vice, and no one virtue. After the banishment of the deputies, the whole power, he observed, being concentrated in the hands of the Directory, the Legislative Body was, in a manner, defunct. *Treaties of peace were violated*, and war was every where waged, without the Councils having any participation either in its origin or in its conduct.

It is remarkable that Mr. Boulay de la Meurthe, who here so pathetically lamented this dreadful state of things, was one of those who most contributed to produce it. It is really amusing to trace the progress of these Republican patriots. After that atrocious act of tyranny, which consigned so many of the representatives of the great nation to the inhospitable wilds of Guiana, an act in which Boulay most heartily concurred, he himself made a motion, which was adopted by the Legislative Body, to repeal all the moderate laws which had been enacted during the whole session. On that occasion he pronounced a flaming panegyric on the very Directory whom he now reprobated, loudly celebrated the victory which they had



obtained over their enemies, and even proposed to perpetuate the memory of that event by the erection of a monument.\* Such is the consistency of republican patriotism!

He proceeded to remark, that the government was equally incapable of making either war or peace; that it had no fixed principles whatever; that it was radically vicious and defective; that it afforded to foreign powers no security for the preservation of peace, and to the French themselves no security for domestic

\* See his speech on this occasion in the *Moniteur* of Sept. 6, 1797. And yet the same writer, whose singular notions of *legal* authority were adverted to in a preceding note, does not hesitate to hold up M. Boulay as a man "who had so much signalized his zeal and talents in opposition to tyranny and oppression; and as a man not only of fine parts, but of unblemished character." *Annual Register* for 1800, History of Europe. P. 56. In addition to his support of one of the most unjust and tyrannical acts which had been committed even in republican France, and to his memorable eulogy on the Directory, by whom it was planned and executed, Boulay, on the 18th of October, 1797, moved, that all men of noble birth should be excluded from every employment, and that all who had held places in the King's household, or in the household of any member of the Royal Family; or who had borne titles, or been decorated with orders, before the revolution, should be transported! This motion was too outrageously barbarous and unjust even for the legislative tools of that Directory to sanction; and it was accordingly negatived. But still it remains on record as a notable instance of Boulay's "opposition to tyranny and oppression!"



happiness. The picture which this republican drew of that "stupendous monument of human happiness, and human integrity," which had been held up to the admiration of Britons, is too curious and interesting, and too replete with salutary instruction to the reforming innovators of all countries, to be passed over lightly. It was notorious, he said, that personal safety might be easily compromised, and that the greater part of property was in a state of insecurity; that all bargains, commerce, and the useful arts, were in a state of stagnation; that there was no longer any confidence between man and man; that the people were harassed and tormented in every possible way; that their misery was so great, and their oppression so complete, that they dared scarcely complain; and that they who saw the causes of these evils had not courage either to make them known, or to point out the proper remedies. And "this deficiency of civil liberty and domestic happiness" he ascribed to "the imperfections and vices of their social organization." The deduction which the orator drew from these premises, was the necessity of a *new revolution*. Another member then read a plan, which had been previously prepared by the Abbè Sieyes, of the new Consular government. By this plan, sixty-one members of the council were deprived of their



seats, for their presumption in opposing the illegal conduct of Buonaparté in the morning; although there did not exist any legal power, in this or any other body, thus to strip the representatives of the people of their lawful authority; and although this punishment of men without trial, and contrary to law, was as great an act of tyranny, and as gross an invasion of the rights of the people, and of the independence of the legislature, as any of those which had been so strongly reprobated in the Directory! The Directory was abolished, and the government was vested in three Consuls, Sieyes, Ducos, and Buonaparté. The two Councils were to retain their powers; and, during the suspension of their sittings, a committee of twenty-five, appointed by each Council, was to exercise their authority, in conjunction with the Consuls, in all matters of police, *legislation*, and finance. To analyze constitutions, and systems of government, which rise up with the rapidity of mushrooms, and fall into decay nearly as soon, were a vain and useless task. The new constitution, surrounded as the Councils were with soldiers, was, of course, accepted unanimously by both Councils; and Lucien Buonaparté hailed the happy event as the *regeneration of liberty*. It must be confessed, that this new birth of French freedom,



which took place on the 10th of November, 1799, was ushered in under most extraordinary auspices; the sword and the bayonet were the unpromising sponsors, though the prospects which *they* held out proved any thing but delusive. The new government was immediately installed, and entered, without delay, on the execution of their office. Buonaparté issued a proclamation, in which he called himself the Soldier of Liberty, although it was perfectly clear that he had just destroyed every vestige of freedom. The Councils returned to Paris; their committees were chosen; and the following oath was framed for all public functionaries: "I swear fidelity to the French Republic, one and indivisible; and to maintain with all my power the *rights of the sovereignty of the people, a representative government, liberty, equality*, and the security of persons and property."

There is no one feature in the conduct of the French factions, which have incessantly harassed their distracted country, from the very dawn of the Revolution to the present moment, more calculated to excite both concern and disgust, in a contemplative and sober mind, than the multiplication of oaths, apparently taken for no other purpose than that of displaying the contempt of the Jacobins for all religious obli-



gations, and of shewing how lightly they considered the deadly guilt of perjury. The members of the Council of Five Hundred took, in the morning, an oath to preserve inviolate that constitution which they suffered to be destroyed in the evening. What a contrast does the conduct of this degenerate people exhibit with that of the ancient Romans, for whom they have affected such unbounded admiration! With the Romans, an oath was ever deemed sacred. In the memorable instance, when the Consul, Quintius Cincinnatus, who attempted to raise an army in Rome for the attack of two neighbouring states, was opposed by the tribunes, he called upon such of the people to follow him, as had taken the oath to the Consuls of the preceding year, to the field; and the people, notwithstanding the representations of their tribunes, who observed, that as Cincinnatus was a private citizen when that oath was administered, it could not bind them to obey him, rejected with disdain the sophistical distinction, and, true to their oaths, immediately flew to arms. The French, however, had been taught, by their impious leaders, throughout the revolution, to treat with contempt all ties but such as interest should induce them to respect.

The present oath, too, came with a bad



grace from men who had just violated, in the most essential parts, the very rights which they now swore to maintain. In effecting a complete revolution in the government, in arbitrarily and illegally expelling sixty-three members from their seats, in abolishing the Directory, and in appointing a Consulate, they had trampled the rights and the sovereignty of the people under foot; and did not even think it necessary to take their opinion on the question.

Though Boulay de la Meurthe had sanctioned all the unconstitutional and violent measures of the Directorial government; he had for some time adopted the notions of Sieyes respecting the necessity of a change. Early in 1799, he had published a pamphlet, in which he investigated the causes which had prevented the establishment of a Republic in England, after the murder of Charles the First; and these causes he represented to be precisely the same with those which had produced the successive destruction of every French constitution, which had been adopted in France since the year 1789; thence predicting, as it were, the near and inevitable subversion of the French Republic.

Lucien Buonaparte, to whom the present change may be principally ascribed, had, in the preceding year, (October 9th, 1798) when the agents of the Directory were employed in bring-



ing about the new revolution in the Cisalpine Republic, broached an opinion which opened a door to perpetual changes, either at home or abroad, whenever the interest, or ambition, of France might require them. On that occasion he observed, "The French constitution was *given* to the Cisalpine Republic. Treaties of alliance had been formed between the two governments; by the existence therefore of these solemn compacts, the *two* governments were *equally* independent." So far the principle which he laid down was indisputably just, and such as would afford no sanction to the comment which has been made on it. But, as if fearful of having advanced a rule which might supply a powerful argument against the invariable conduct of the French government, he hastened to provide an exception of so general and sweeping a nature, as wholly to destroy the efficacy of the rule.— "An occasion might doubtless occur," he continued, "when the safety of France might require precautions to be taken in Italy, and when a state of war would demand reforms and *changes*; then it would be excusable in France to MAKE," (though both were equally independent) "the Cisalpine Republic SUBMIT to a temporary DEPRIVATION of her INDEPENDENCE. In such a case France might JUSTLY TAKE BACK *what she has* GIVEN." By this



accommodating conscience, and this ingenious kind of sophistry, there was no act of tyranny, no perjury, which might not be sanctioned and justified.

The new *committees* now proceeded to regulate the financial concerns of the Republic, and to raise the supplies for the ensuing year. Berthier, the constant adviser, and military preceptor, of Buonaparte, was made war-minister, and to him was entrusted the sum of about one million and a half sterling, for the current expences of his department, without any specification of the particular services to which it might be applied. By the fiat of the Consuls, who had sworn to maintain liberty, sentence of banishment was pronounced on fifty-nine members of the opposition, of whom thirty-seven were to be sent to Cayenne, and the rest to the Isle of Oleron. But whether they were afraid to carry this sentence into execution, in the present state of the public mind, or whether they wished to acquire a character for mercy, which was an alien to their hearts, the sentence was afterwards repealed. Several popular measures of internal police, and economical regulation, were adopted to conciliate, if possible, the public esteem; some unjust laws were revoked, some acts of severity cancelled, and some marks of indulgence shewn to certain unhappy emigrants who



had been shipwrecked on the coast, imprisoned, and, by an apt specimen of revolutionary logic, made to fall within the meaning of a law which rendered those who *returned* to France, after emigration, guilty of a capital offence.

After these preliminary measures, the three Consuls laboured to give the finishing stroke, the last polish, to the new political production of the prolific brain of the Abbè Sieyes. It was produced to the world on the 15th of December, in a proclamation addressed, by the councils, to the people of France. The government was now to be vested in a chief Consul, Buonaparté himself, assisted by two subordinate Consuls, Cambacères and Le Brun, with a conservative senate, and a mixed legislative body, composed of tribunes and senators; the former to talk but not to vote; and the latter to vote, but not to talk. In this new system, the executive power was every thing, and the legislative power nothing. The wary Sieyes, the father of this notable scheme of government, passed from the consulship to the conservative senate, and had the estate of Crosne assigned him for his services. Ducos, also, sunk into a senator. Buonaparté, now in possession of kingly power, established his residence at the palace of the Thuilleries, in the very apartments formerly occupied by the family of his murdered sovereign.



Such was the state of Europe at the close of 1799. Mr. Pitt had experienced the mortification of seeing his whole system of foreign policy frustrated, by persons whom he could not command, and by events which he could not controul. Had the Austrian cabinet been true to the principles of the grand confederacy, faithful to her alliance, and intent on the accomplishment of its great object; and had the British government undertaken the expedition to Holland at an earlier part of the campaign, when Massena was pressed by the Archduke in Switzerland, and Joubert and Moreau by Suworow in Italy, and had appropriated a larger force to the enterprize, the wings of Republican France might have been clipped; she might have been stripped of her conquests; her vassals might have been restored to freedom and independence; and one other struggle might have emancipated Europe from the degrading shackles of Gallic tyranny.

Still, discouraging as the failure of a plan so admirably combined unquestionably must have been, the relative state of the belligerent powers was much more favourable to the allies than it had been at the opening of the campaign, and, therefore, Mr. Pitt was sensible that the interest of this country, in common with the interests of all Europe, required the exertion of every effort



that could be made, with the least hope of success, for humbling the pride, and repressing the power, of the general enemy. In order, then, to increase our military force, and to provide the necessary supplies, Parliament was called together so early as the 24th of September. The reason assigned for this extraordinary convocation of the great councils of the nation, at such an unusual period, was the necessity that existed, under the present circumstances of Europe, to increase our regular army. A bill was accordingly brought forward, by the Ministers, for enabling three-fifths of the militia to enter into the line, if they should think proper so to do. By a former law this power was granted only to one-fourth of the militia. This had been found the most effectual measure of speedily recruiting the army, of any that could be adopted; and it was therefore not surprizing, that, on such an emergency, the servants of the crown should have recourse to it. It was opposed, however, as well on general principles, from its alleged tendency to diminish the constitutional force of the country, (as the militia was called, in contradistinction to the regulars, though most irregularly, as every force, established by an act of the legislature is equally constitutional, and any force that has not the sanction of Parliament, is unconstitutional) and from motives of a more



personal nature, by the commanders of militia regiments, who complained, and not without reason, of the extreme hardship of having their men taken from them as soon as they had fitted them for service; by which, indeed, the colonel of a militia regiment was reduced almost to the situation of a recruiting serjeant. To these objections, however, were opposed the paramount principle, by which all private considerations are made to yield to the public good. And, against the first of them it was urged, that it was founded on a fallacy, as it was intended to fill up any vacancies that might be thus occasioned in the militia, by an early ballot. After this bill had been passed into a law, and the necessary supplies granted for the public service, for the first months of the ensuing year, the Parliament was prorogued for the holidays.

Meantime, Buonaparté, finding himself, to his great astonishment, quietly placed in possession of supreme power, and of the palace of the Bourbons, deemed it expedient to assume a kingly tone; and, therefore, on Christmas day, he addressed a letter direct to the Sovereign of these realms, to announce to his Majesty the happy event which had taken place in France. "Called by the wishes of the French nation," said the Corsican, with his usual contempt of truth, "to occupy the first magistracy of the



Republic, I think it proper, on entering into office, to make a direct communication of it to your Majesty. Must the war, which has, for eight years, ravaged the four quarters of the globe, be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding? How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, powerful and strong beyond what their inclination requires, sacrifice to ideas of vain grandeur the advantages of commerce, internal prosperity, and the happiness of individuals? How is it that they do not feel that peace is an object of the first necessity, as it is one of the greatest glory? These sentiments cannot be foreign from the heart of your Majesty, who reigns over a free nation, and with the sole view of promoting its happiness.

“ Your Majesty will only see, in this overture, my sincere desire to contribute efficaciously, for a second time, to a general pacification, by a step speedy, entirely confidential, and disengaged from those forms which, necessary, perhaps, to disguise the dependence of weak states, prove, in those which are strong, only the mutual desire of deceiving one another. France and England, by the abuse of their strength, may still, for a long time, for the misfortune of all nations, postpone the period of their exhaustion; but I will venture to



assert, that the fate of all civilized nations depends on the termination of a war which involves the whole world."

This letter was transmitted by a special messenger, and inclosed in a note from Talleyrand, now minister for foreign affairs, to Lord Grenville. It is more than probable, that it was written at the suggestion of Talleyrand himself, who had passed some time in England, at the close of 1792, when he was in habits of intercourse with the leading members of Opposition; and who had, of course, a competent knowledge of the political tactics of party in this country. He possibly thought, that if it produced no other effect favourable to France, the letter would supply a theme on which the orators of the party might expatiate with advantage, when the measure should be submitted to Parliament. It squared, too, very much with the present views of the Corsican, who had sought to conciliate the people of France by a profession of moderate principles, in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of his public life; and by the display of a pacific disposition, which his conduct, during the whole of the revolution, belied.

Had he really been sincere in his avowed desire to stop the effusion of blood, which French ambition and French rapacity had alone



caused to flow in torrents, he would not have contented himself with vague and loose expressions; he would not have pursued the Machiavelian policy which the Republic had invariably observed; he would not have addressed his overtures, such as they were, to the belligerent powers separately, but to the members of the armed confederacy, in the aggregate. By such an attempt as the present he clearly demonstrated his object to be the dissemination of discord and mistrust between the allies. If the substance of these extraordinary overtures, which must be considered as phenomena in the diplomatic world, be analyzed, it will be found to consist in two simple questions, "whether the war which had, for eight years, ravaged the four quarters of the globe, was to be eternal?" and "whether there was no means of coming to a good understanding?" The only answer, then, which the note required, was—to the first question, no; to the second, yes. But it is farther remarkable, that, at the time when it was written, Buonaparté did not even know whether the people, over whom he had established himself supreme dictator, would accept the constitution which he offered them. The bayonet which had secured his power, indeed, should, he was resolved, maintain it. But as that bayonet had been employed so fre-



quently to demolish its own work, it might be used for the same purpose again, and the next dictator might overturn the fabric which the present had erected, and abrogate the treaties which his predecessor might conclude. There was one mark of his adherence to revolutionary principles displayed in this note; in the studied contempt of those forms which civilized Europe had, for centuries, deemed it necessary to observe and respect, but which the Corsican now represented as nothing more than the instruments of deception in the hands of powerful states. Had he entertained a wish to inspire confidence, had he been anxious to afford a proof of his sincerity, he might, without the aid of those forms which, by an affectation of superiority, so truly ridiculous in such a personage, treated with such sovereign contempt, have declared his readiness to renounce all views of conquest and aggrandizement, to forego all design of revolutionizing Europe, to repeal those *still unrepealed* decrees which were the immediate cause of the war with England, and, ultimately, to conclude a peace with the *allies* on the footing of the *status quo ante bellum*. He knew that these were terms (given with a considerable modification of the last, in favour of France) on which the British Minister had long since avowed his readiness to treat; though, even in that case, it would have



been necessary to enquire what better security he could offer for his observance of a treaty founded on this basis, than his predecessors in the exercise of supreme power could give, who, according to the confessions of his own ministers, broke all the treaties which they made.

It was worthy of consideration, whether there was any thing in the personal character of the individual, which could tend to inspire the necessary confidence in his engagements. "Society," it has been observed, "is built upon trust, and trust upon confidence in one another's integrity."\* It follows, then, that the integrity of an individual is the standard by which we are to decide how far a man is deserving of confidence. Now, there was scarcely one crime in the black catalogue of human depravity, which this man had not committed in the course of his revolutionary career. Whether contemplated at an early period of his public life, accepting the discarded mistress of his patron as the condition of his promotion; or, at the head of a victorious army, dealing death and desolation around, watering the tree of liberty with the blood of *emancipated slaves*; not content with the devastation of war, and the

\* Dr. South.



slaughter of battle ; reducing defenceless villages to ashes, and murdering their innocent and unprotected inhabitants ; carrying plunder and rapine in his train, gratifying his avarice by unheard-of extortions, satiating his cruelty by unexampled oppressions, and aggravating the horrors of war by the SALE OF HIS PRISONERS ;\* combining the malignity of a fiend with the despotism of a tyrant, in constantly adding insult to injury ; offering freedom, but imposing slavery ; promising happiness, but diffusing misery ; professing a respect for the catholic religion, but persecuting its ministers, and deposing its chief ; profaning the altars of God, and trampling on the independence of man ; viewed, at either of these periods, or under any of these circumstances, his conduct, far from inspiring confidence, could excite only sentiments of detestation and disgust. But, if he had been followed still farther, to the unoffending shores of Egypt, and beheld coolly directing the wanton and useless assassination of the wretched inhabitants of Alexandria, men, women, and children, for four successive hours ; murdering his Turkish captives, and consigning

\* Many of the Austrians taken during the campaign of 1796, in Italy, were sold to the Spaniards, to work in their mines in South America.



his own sick troops to an untimely grave; and then, crowning all his enormities, by an open renunciation of the blessed Saviour of the world, horror must have subdued every other feeling, and the impious monster have been left to the just vengeance of an offended God. Such was the real character of the man who called upon the British Sovereign to repose confidence in his assertions; and, as an additional inducement to confide in him, he might have referred his Majesty to the sentiments avowed in his letter to Kleber, on his flight from Egypt;—that letter, in which he desired his successor to cajole the Porte, by protesting, as he himself had done, that the French never meant to retain Egypt for themselves, in the very same breath in which he expatiated on its vast importance to France. Or he might have referred to the advice of Poussielgue, which he had evidently adopted,—“*at all events it is necessary to open negotiations with the English and the Porte, if it were only to gain time, and to give umbrage to Russia.*”

The Ministry took some time to consider what would be the proper answer to give to an application at once so unexpected and so unprecedented, both in form and substance; and, at length, on the fourth of January, a letter was sent, by Lord Grenville, to Talleyrand, contain-



ing an official note, in which it was observed, that the King had given frequent proofs of his sincere desire for the re-establishment of secure and permanent tranquillity in Europe. He never was, nor had been, engaged in any contest for a vain and false glory. He had no other view than that of maintaining, against all aggression, the rights and happiness of his subjects. For these he had contended against an unprovoked attack; and, for the same objects, he was still obliged to contend; nor could he hope that this necessity would be removed by entering, at the present moment, into negotiation with those whom a fresh revolution had so recently placed in the exercise of power in France; since no real advantage could arise from such negotiation to the great and desirable object of general peace, until it should distinctly appear, that those causes had ceased to operate which originally produced the war, and by which it had since been protracted, and, in more than one instance, renewed. The same system, to the prevalence of which France justly ascribed all her present miseries, was that which had also involved the rest of Europe in a long and destructive warfare, of a nature long since unknown to the practice of civilized nations. For the extension of this system, and for the extermination of all established govern-



ments, the resources of France had, from year to year, and in the midst of the most unparalleled distress, been lavished and exhausted. To that indiscriminate spirit of destruction, the Netherlands, the United Provinces, the Swiss Cantons, (his Majesty's ancient friends and allies) had successively been sacrificed. Germany had been ravaged; Italy, though then rescued from its invaders, had been made the scene of unbounded rapine and anarchy. His Majesty had himself been compelled to maintain an arduous and burthensome contest for the independence and existence of his kingdoms. Nor had these calamities been confined to Europe alone; they had been extended to the most distant quarters of the world, and even to countries so remote, both in situation and interest, from the present contest, that the very existence of such a war was perhaps unknown to those who found themselves suddenly involved in all its horrors. While such a system continued to prevail, and while the blood and treasure of a numerous and powerful nation could be lavished in its support, experience had shewn that no defence, but that of open and steady hostility, could be availing. The most solemn treaties had only paved the way for fresh aggression; and it was to a determined resistance alone that was now due whatever remained in Europe of



stability for property, for personal liberty, for social order, or for the free exercise of religion.

For the security, therefore, of these essential objects, his Majesty could not place his reliance on the mere renewal of general professions of pacific disposition. Such professions had repeatedly been held out by all those who had successively directed the resources of France to the destruction of Europe; and whom the present rulers had declared to have been all, from the beginning, and uniformly, incapable of maintaining the relations of amity and peace. Greatly, indeed, would his Majesty rejoice, whenever it should appear that the dangers to which his own dominions, and those of his allies, had been so long exposed, had really ceased; whenever he should be satisfied, that the necessity of resistance was at an end; that, after the experience of so many years of crimes and miseries, better principles had ultimately prevailed in France; and that all the gigantic projects of ambition, and all the restless schemes of destruction, which had endangered the very existence of civil society, had, at length, been finally relinquished;—but the conviction of such a change, however agreeable to his Majesty's wishes, could result only from experience, and from the evidence of facts.



The best and most natural pledge of its reality and permanence would be the restoration of that line of princes which, for so many centuries, maintained the French nation in prosperity at home, and in consideration and respect abroad; such an event would at once have removed, and would, at any time, remove, all obstacles in the way of negotiation or peace. It would confirm to France the unmolested enjoyment of its ancient territory; and it would give to all the other nations of Europe, in tranquillity and peace, that security which they were now compelled to seek by other means. His Majesty made no claim to prescribe to France what should be the form of her government, or in whose hands she should vest the authority necessary for conducting the affairs of a great and powerful nation. His Majesty looked only to the security of his own dominions, and those of his allies, and to the general safety of Europe. Whenever he should judge that such security could, in any manner, be obtained, as resulting either from the internal situation of that country from whose internal situation the danger had arisen, or from such other circumstances, of whatever nature, as might produce the same end, his Majesty would eagerly embrace the opportunity to concert with his allies the means of immediate and general



pacification. Unhappily, no such security yet existed; no sufficient evidence of the principles by which the new government would be directed; no reasonable ground by which to judge of its stability. In that situation it could, for the present, only remain for his Majesty to pursue, in conjunction with other powers, those exertions of just and defensive war, which his regard to the happiness of his subjects would never permit him either to continue beyond the necessity in which they originated, or to terminate on any other grounds than such as might best contribute to the secure enjoyment of their tranquillity, their constitution, and their independence.

Such were the grounds on which the British Minister now rested his conduct in resisting an application so unprecedented in its nature, and so vague and undefined in its object, or rather, in the means of accomplishing it. There certainly existed no reason for believing that Buonaparté had renounced the principles of his predecessors, or that he would more scrupulously observe any treaty which he might conclude. The presumption, indeed, was entirely against any such conclusion. Buonaparté, in fact, soon convinced the world, that he was ready to justify the conduct of the first revolutionists, whenever it was called in question, however he



might affect to condemn it, when his own interest seemed to require it. In the reply to this answer of the British Cabinet, dated January 14th, he renewed the oft-confuted assertion, that France was not the aggressor in the war; that, so far from having provoked it, she had, from the commencement of her revolution, solemnly proclaimed her love of peace, and her disinclination to conquests, her respect for the independence of all governments; and it was not to be doubted that, occupied entirely at that time with her own internal affairs, she would have avoided taking part in those of Europe, and would have remained faithful to her declarations. But, from an opposite disposition, as soon as the French revolution had broken out, almost all Europe entered into a league for its destruction. The aggression was real long time before it was public; internal resistance was excited; its opponents were favourably received, their extravagant declamations were supported; the French nation was insulted in the persons of its agents; and England set particularly this example by the dismissal of the Minister accredited to her. Finally, France was, in fact, attacked in her independence, in her honour, and in her safety, *long time before the war was declared.*

That Mr. Talleyrand should have subscribed



his name to an assertion so monstrously false is really astonishing. The war was declared against England and Holland, by France, on the first of February, 1793, and, at the very end of the preceding year, this very man, Talleyrand himself, had informed his government, that England was only intent on preserving a rigid neutrality. He knew, therefore, that he uttered a falsehood, at the moment when he penned the above sentence in his official note.

But the note proceeded, in the same strain, and with the same confidence, to assert, that it was to the projects of subjection, dissolution, and dismemberment, which were prepared against her, and the execution of which was several times attempted and pursued, that France had a right to impute the evils which she had suffered herself, as well as those which had afflicted Europe. Such projects, for a long time without example, with respect to so powerful a nation, could not fail to bring on the most fatal consequences. Assailed on all sides, the Republic could not but extend universally the efforts of her defence; and *it was only for the maintenance of her own independence that she had made use of those means which she possessed, in her own strength, and the courage of her citizens.*



The renewal of such assertions, six years after the commencement of the war, and after Brissot on the one hand, and Robespierre on the other, had amply confuted them, each having ascribed the war to the other, and neither to any of the combined powers, putting the strong evidence of facts entirely out of the question, was a certain proof that the same aggressive disposition, the same encroaching and ambitious spirit, the same duplicity, and the same principles, which had marked each successive demagogue who had usurped the reins of government in France, pervaded the mind of the New Consul, and were likely to be the guide of his policy. After the accumulated proofs which, in the former volumes of this history, have been adduced, on the question of aggression, it would be an unwarrantable trespass on the patience of the reader, again formally to confute the string of falsehoods so confidently advanced in the French reply to Lord Grenville's answer. But it must be observed, that Talleyrand studiously avoided all reference to the conditions on which France would be disposed to treat; all answer to Lord Grenville's arguments, on the insecurity of a treaty in the present situation of France;—and, while he offered passports for a plenipotentiary to repair to Dunkirk or elsewhere, he still persisted in excluding the allies of Great Britain,



and in confining the proposed negotiation to England and France.

In the answer, which Lord Grenville forwarded on the twentieth of January, the King expressed his concern in observing, that the unprovoked aggressions of France, *the sole cause and origin of the war*, were systematically defended by her present rulers, under the same injurious pretences by which they were originally attempted to be disguised. His Majesty refused to enter into the refutation of allegations then universally exploded, and, in so far as they respected his Majesty's conduct, not only in themselves utterly groundless, but contradicted, both by the internal evidence of the transactions to which they related, and also by the express testimony (given at the time) of the government of France itself. The French Minister was referred to the first note of the British government for his Majesty's opinion of the present overtures.

The day after this final answer was written, (January the 21st,) Parliament assembled, and the foregoing papers were submitted to both Houses, and occasioned some very long debates. The principles on which the Cabinet had acted were defended in the House of Peers, by Lord Grenville, with whose department the business was more immediately connected; and, in the Lower House by Mr. Pitt. The debate in the



Lords took place on the 28th of January, when the arguments of Ministers were resisted, chiefly, by the Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland. The Duke imputed the attack which Lord Grenville had made on the character of Buonaparté to *littleness of mind*, and, therefore, thought no terms sufficiently strong to censure it. He did not see any use in descanting upon that character, although, as the confidence necessary to be reposed in him for the fulfilment of any treaty which the King might conclude must rest, materially, on the ground of his personal qualities and dispositions; it appeared most natural to inquire, in what manner these had influenced his public conduct, particularly in respect of other treaties which had been formed between the French Republic and the different powers of the Continent. His Grace, overlooking entirely the intolerable slavery under which all the powers subjugated by France, and even France herself, had long laboured, from the poisonous influence of her revolutionary principles, could see nothing but the people, in *this* country, “bending under the accumulated weight of taxes. The continuance of that *oppression* which, he said, they endured, would either make them torpid slaves, or prepare them for revolution. If the people were driven to despair, by griping tax-gatherers, *like the French*, they would look up



to themselves, and *redress their own grievances.*" It is perfectly clear, that the *tendency* of the language, contained in many parts of this speech, was to excite an insurrection in the country, by telling the people, that they were subjected to oppression, from which nothing but their own interposition, in opposition to the Executive and Legislative authorities, or else a revolution, which, indeed, would have been the natural fruits of such interposition, could possibly relieve them. The vast property which the Duke of Bedford possessed in the country would naturally enough exempt him from any suspicion of harbouring a wish to produce such an effect; but the admission of this apology would only change the object of censure, by complimenting his integrity at the expence of his understanding. His Grace moved an Address, the object of which was to compel Ministers to open a negotiation with France. He was answered by the Earls of Carlisle, Liverpool, and Caernarvon, and by the Lords Romney and Borringdon; and his arguments, or rather assertions, made so little impression on the House, that the motion for the original Address, made by Lord Grenville, was carried with only *six* dissentient voices.

The subject was discussed, in the House of Commons, on the third of February, when



Mr. Dundas opened the debate and took a masterly view of the question. His main arguments were directed to an illustration of the important fact—that “the leading feature of the French Revolution was a total disregard of all treaties and obligations, and a sovereign contempt for the rights and privileges of other powers.” He shewed that, by a rigid adherence to the original inherent principles of the revolution, every attempt at negotiation had been rendered abortive. And he contended, that even if a treaty of peace had been concluded at Lille, the renewal of war must have taken place, before the present moment, as that treaty would not have prevented the French government from adopting that aggressive conduct, and from pursuing those schemes of ambition, which had, in so many instances, been recently manifested by them. Mr. Whitbread followed much the same line of argument as had been observed by the Duke of Bedford; and, as if resolved to suffer no opportunity to escape him of varnishing over the crimes of Buonaparté, or of finding some justification for them, he insisted, that the Corsican was *as good* as the Sovereigns of Europe;—“if he has broken treaties, so have they;—if he has killed his ten thousands, Suworow also has killed his ten thousands!!!” By the same curious logic,



the most atrocious acts might be justified, and the vilest criminals be brought in comparison with the most upright men; Carrier might be compared with a British judge; the Poissardes of Paris with the followers of Monk; and the murderer at Jaffa with the hero of the Boyne! Mr. Whitbread ridiculed the idea of endeavouring to restore a banished King to his Throne, or a Pope to his Tiara.

Some of the misrepresentations of Mr. Whitbread, who, in his zeal for the defence of his favourite Corsican, had imputed breaches of faith to the government of his own country, in their conduct to Tuscany and Genoa, were corrected by Mr. Canning, who shewed that nothing had been done to those States but what was fully warranted by the law of nations. He was followed by Mr. Erskine, who strongly censured the conduct of Ministers in rejecting the overtures of Buonaparté, and represented the prospect which a continuance of that war held out as hopeless and desperate.

Mr. Pitt deemed it expedient, on such an occasion, when the mere fact of making overtures, he knew, would, with persons who looked but superficially at the subject, give to the enemy an apparent advantage, which, of course, the Opposition had laboured to improve, to enter into a full investigation of the subject,



and to suffer no fact to escape without its due application, and no allegation to pass without an appropriate answer. He began by observing, that Mr. Erskine seemed to have assumed, as the foundation of his reasoning, and as the great argument for an immediate peace, that every effort to overturn the system of the French revolution must be unavailing; and that it would be not only imprudent, but almost impious, to struggle longer against that order of things which, by he knew not what principle of predestination, Mr. Erskine appeared to consider as immortal. Little as he was inclined to accede to this opinion, he was not sorry that the subject had been contemplated in that serious point of view. He did, indeed, consider the French revolution as the severest trial which the visitation of Providence had ever yet inflicted upon the nations of the earth; but he could not help reflecting, with satisfaction, that this country, even under such a trial, had not only been exempted from those calamities which had covered almost every other part of Europe, but appeared to have been reserved as a refuge and an asylum to those who fled from its persecution, as a barrier to oppose its progress, and, perhaps, ultimately, as an instrument to deliver the world from the crimes and miseries which had attended it.



Under this impression it was that he proposed to take a large and comprehensive view of the question; in doing which he agreed with Mr. Dundas, that it would, in every case, be impossible to separate the present discussion from the former crimes and atrocities of the French revolution; because both the papers then on the table, and the whole of Mr. Erskine's arguments, forced upon their consideration the origin of the war, and all the material facts which had occurred during its continuance. Mr. Erskine had revived and retailed all those arguments from his own pamphlet, which had before passed through thirty-seven or thirty-eight editions in print; and now gave them to the House embellished by the graces of his personal delivery. The First Consul had also thought fit to revive and retail all the chief arguments used by all the opposition speakers, and all the opposition writers, in this country, during the last seven years. And (what was still more material,) the question itself, which was now immediately at issue,—the question, whether, under the present circumstances, there was such a prospect of security from any treaty with France as ought to induce them to negotiate, could not be properly decided upon, without retracing, both from their own experience, and from that of



other nations, the nature, the causes, and the magnitude, of the danger against which they had to guard, in order to judge of the security which they ought to accept.

Before any man could concur in opinion with Mr. Erskine,—before any man could think that the substance of his Majesty's answer was any other than such as the safety of the country required,—before any man could be of opinion, that to overtures made by the enemy, at such a time, and under such circumstances, it would have been safe to return an answer concurring in the negotiation,—he must come within one of the three following descriptions: He must either believe that the French revolution neither did then exhibit, nor had at any time exhibited, such circumstances of danger, arising out of the very nature of the system, and of the internal state and condition of France, as to leave to foreign powers no adequate ground of security in negotiation; or, secondly, he must be of opinion, that the change which had recently taken place had given that security which, in the former stages of the revolution, was wanting; or, thirdly, he must be one who, believing that the danger existed, not undervaluing its extent, nor mistaking its nature, nevertheless thought, from his view of the present pressure on the country, from his view



of its situation and its prospects, compared with the situation and prospects of its enemies, that we were, with our eyes open, bound to accept of inadequate security for every thing that was valuable and sacred, rather than endure the pressure, or incur the risk, which would result from a farther prolongation of the contest.

In discussing the last of these questions, the House would be led to consider, what inference was to be drawn from the circumstances and the result of our own negotiations, in former periods of the war; whether, in the comparative state of the two countries, the same reason would be found to exist for repeating our then unsuccessful experiments; or whether we had not thence derived the lessons of experience, added to the deductions of reason, marking the inefficacy and danger of the very measures which had been quoted as precedents for adoption at the present moment.

Unwilling as Mr. Pitt professed himself to be to go into such detail, on ground which had been so often trodden before, yet, when he found Mr. Erskine, after all the information which he must have received, if he had read any of the answers to his work, (however ignorant he might be when he wrote it) still giving the sanction of his authority to the supposition, that the order to Mr. Chauvelin to depart from



this kingdom was the cause of the war between this country and France, he did feel it necessary to make a few observations on that part of the subject.

Here Mr. Pitt, by a plain statement of facts, relative to the origin and course of the war, overthrew the whole flimsy fabric which Mr. Erskine had erected for himself. It is needless to follow him through this statement, as, in a preceding volume, the subject has been most amply discussed, and all the arguments and assertions of the French and their advocates proved, by authentic documents, to be destitute of foundation. Three facts only, it may be useful to repeat, relating to the ridiculous affirmation, that the dismissal of M. Chauvelin was the real cause of the war between this country and France. First, that Chauvelin had given in a peremptory ultimatum, by declaring that, if the explanations of the Directory were not received as sufficient, and if Great Britain did not immediately disarm, her refusal would be considered as a declaration of war. Secondly, that, even after the departure of Chauvelin from the country, the door was open to future explanation, which was not only not discouraged, but even solicited, by Mr. Pitt. And, thirdly, the Executive Council of France had actually issued orders for the recal of Chauvelin



before they could possibly know that he was sent out of this country, under the provisions of the Alien act.

For the further exposure of the pretext, that the refusal to receive an Ambassador from the Regicide Republic, in its infancy, was a good ground for war, on the part of the French, the Opposition were reminded of the conduct of those neutral powers whose moderation and wise policy had been so often the subject of their admiration, and the theme of their praise. Denmark, for instance, who had preserved a constant friendship with France, had not, for years, admitted an Ambassador from the Republic. In December, 1793, Count Bernstorff, the Danish Minister, officially declared, that "it was well known, that the National Convention had appointed Mr. Grouvelle Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Denmark, but that it was also well known, that he had neither been received nor acknowledged in that quality." And it was not till February, 1796, that Grouvelle was acknowledged by the Danish Cabinet, and the reason assigned by the same Minister for this change of conduct, was this—"So long as no other than a revolutionary government existed in France, his Majesty could not acknowledge the Minister of that government, but now that the French Constitution is



completely organized, and a regular government established in France, his Majesty's obligation ceases in that respect, and Mr. Grouvelle will therefore be acknowledged in the usual form." It would have puzzled his Danish Majesty to point out that difference between the revolutionary government of 1793, and the revolutionary government of 1796, which he urged as a reason for the change in his own conduct; but the fact was introduced by Mr. Pitt, for the sole purpose of shewing, that the principle acted upon by the country had been uniformly adopted by other States, and even by those powers who had never been at war with France.

Mr. Pitt then considered the nature of the ultimatum delivered in by Chauvelin, and proved it to be such as no country, having a due sense of national honour, a just regard for national security, and adequate means for resisting aggression, could have admitted. In the course of this investigation, which, of necessity, contained a repetition of facts and of arguments, which had been used before, on the same subject, he demonstrated the variance between the professions and the conduct of the Regicidal rulers of Republican France. He shewed that, while they incessantly pursued those schemes of conquest which they had solemnly renounced,



notwithstanding their formal denial of the construction put by the British Ministers upon their decrees of the 19th of November and 15th of December, 1792, for exciting revolutions in foreign countries, they had invariably acted upon it, and had immediately, and specifically, applied those decrees to England. As the Opposition had not been ashamed to adopt the miserable subterfuges, contained in Talleyrand's jesuitical note, for the patriotic purpose of fixing the charge of aggression, by acts committed previous to the dismissal of Chauvelin, upon their own country, Mr. Pitt found it necessary to prove, by the admission of the French themselves, both Robespierreans and Brissotins, by Talleyrand and by Chauvelin, the falsehood of the statement. And, independently of such incontrovertible testimony, on a point of this nature, Mr. Pitt asserted, distinctly and positively, and produced documents in support of his assertion, that, so far from being a party in any plans hostile to France, previous to the end of 1792, the British Cabinet had wholly declined all communications with foreign powers on the subject of such projects, and had adopted a resolution, to which they pertinaciously adhered, not to interfere, in any manner, with the internal affairs of France. Nor was any step whatever taken to enter into any concert



against France, till after the offensive decree of the 19th of November, 1792.

Even then the Ministers had gone no further than to propose the adoption of a line of conduct which should have for its object the prevention of hostilities ;—by calling upon France, in an amicable manner, to withdraw her troops within her own limits, to rescind all acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nations ; and to give, in some public and unequivocal manner, a pledge of her intention no longer to foment troubles, or to excite disturbances, against other governments. On these conditions, which were purely and strictly of a *defensive* and *preservative* nature, Mr. Pitt having, thus satisfactorily, explained the principles and views of the government, at the close of 1792, and made suitable comments on its moderation, forbearance, and sincerity, observed, that he did mean to challenge the applause and approbation of his country, because he must now confess that the Ministers had been too slow in anticipating that danger of which they had, perhaps, even then, sufficient experience ; though far short, indeed, of that which they now possessed ; and that they might even then have seen, what facts had since but too incontestibly proved, that nothing but vigorous and open hostility could afford complete and



adequate security against revolutionary principles, while they retained a proportion of power sufficient to furnish the means of war.

Mr. Pitt summed up that head of his argument which related to the origin of the war, by stating that he had detailed to the House a system which was in itself a declaration of war against all nations, which was so intended, and which had been so applied; which had been exemplified in the extreme peril and hazard of almost all who, for a moment, had trusted to treaty, and which had not, at that hour, overwhelmed Europe in one indiscriminate mass of ruin, only because England had not indulged, to a fatal extremity, that disposition, which she had, however, indulged too far; because she had not consented to trust to profession and compromise, rather than to her own valour and exertion, for security against a system, from which she never would be delivered, till either the principle was extinguished, or till its strength was exhausted. That principle had been faithfully applied, without distinction, against every nation in Europe, and against some out of Europe. A man could not look at the map of Europe, and lay his hand upon that country against which France had not either declared an open and aggressive war, or violated some posi-



tive treaty, or broken some recognized principle of the law of nations.

Here he took a rapid view of the aggressive spirit and hostile conduct of France, against independent and neutral states, previous to the war with England; he shewed that no project for dismembering the French territory had entered into the projects of Austria and Prussia; that the pretended treaty of Pavia was a clumsy forgery; that the declaration of Pilnitz related solely to the imprisonment of Louis the 16th, and had never been acted upon; and, in short, that there was neither excuse nor pretext for the repeated attacks made by France on the neighbouring powers. Mr. Pitt then reviewed the revolutionary proceedings of France, and her treatment of foreign powers, subsequently to that period, and down to the treaty of Campo Formio, and the surrender of Venice to Austria.

Mr. Erskine, adopting the sentiments of Talleyrand, had told the House, that all the French conquests were produced by the operations of the Allies. It was when they were pressed on all sides, when their own territory was in danger, when their own independence was in question, when the confederacy appeared too strong, it was then they used the means with which their power and their courage supplied them; and, "attacked upon all sides, they



carried every where their defensive arms." Mr. Pitt disclaimed all intention of misrepresenting his learned antagonist, but he understood him to speak of this sentiment with approbation. The sentiment itself was this ;—that if a nation was unjustly attacked in any one quarter by others, she could not stop to consider by whom, but must find means of strength in other quarters, no matter where ; and was justified in attacking, in her turn, those with whom she was at peace, and from whom she had received no species of provocation. Mr. Pitt had proved that no attack was made upon France, but, if it had been made, he maintained, that the whole ground upon which that argument was founded could not be tolerated. " In the name of the laws of nature and of nations ;" said he, " in the name of every thing that is sacred and honourable, I demur to that plea, and I tell that honourable and learned gentleman, that he would do well to look again into the law of nations, before he ventures to come to this House, to give the sanction of his authority to so dreadful and execrable a system."

Mr. Erskine here denied having maintained such a proposition ;—when Mr. Pitt expressed his hope that, if such were the case, he would transfer some portion of the indignation which he had hitherto lavished upon the declaration of



the British ministers to the note of the French secretary. Though Mr. Erskine disclaimed the principle, the French note avowed it; and Mr. Pitt contended, without the fear of contradiction, that it was the principle upon which France had uniformly acted. But Mr. Erskine had himself asserted, and maintained, in the whole course of his argument, that the pressure of the war upon France imposed upon her the necessity of those exertions, which produced most of the enormities of the Revolution, and most of the enormities practised against the other countries of Europe. The House was called upon to recollect, that, in the year 1796, when all those horrors in Italy were beginning, which were the strongest illustrations of the general character of the French Revolution, the British Ministers had begun that negotiation to which Mr. Erskine had referred. England then possessed numerous conquests; England, though not having, at that time, had the advantage of three of her most splendid victories, England, even then, appeared undisputed mistress of the sea; England, having then engrossed the whole wealth of the Colonial world; England having lost nothing of her original possessions; England then comes forward proposing general peace, and offering——what? Not the dismemberment, not the partition, of ancient France, but the



return of a part of those conquests, no one of which could be retained, but in direct contradiction to that original and solemn pledge which was now referred, as *the* proof of the just and moderate disposition of the French Republic. Yet even this offer was not sufficient to procure peace, or to arrest the progress of France in her *defensive* operations against other unoffending countries. From the pages, however, of Mr. Erskine's pamphlet, (which, after all its editions, was now fresher in *his* memory, than in that of any other person in that House, or in the country,) he was furnished with an argument on the result of the negotiation, on which he appeared confidently to rely. He maintained, that the single point on which the negotiation was broken off, was the question of the possession of the Austrian Netherlands, and that it was, therefore, on that ground only that the war had been continued. But the question then at issue was not, whether the Netherlands should, in fact, be restored; though even on that question he was not, like Mr. Erskine, unprepared to give any opinion; he was ready to say, that to leave that territory in the possession of France would be obviously dangerous to the interests of this country, and inconsistent with the policy which it had uniformly pursued, at every period in which it had



concerned itself in the general system of the Continent; but it was not on the decision of this question of expediency and policy that the issue of the negotiation then turned; what was required of us by France was, not merely that we should acquiesce in her retention of the Netherlands, but that, as preliminary to all treaty, and before entering upon the discussion of terms, we should recognize the principle, that whatever France, in time of war, had annexed to the Republic, must remain inseparable for ever, and could not become the subject of negotiation. In the refusal of such a preliminary, England was only resisting the claim of France to arrogate to herself the power of controlling, by her own separate and municipal acts, the rights and interests of other countries, and moulding, at her discretion, a new and general code of the law of nations.

In reviewing the issue of this negotiation, it was important to observe, that France, who began by abjuring a love of conquest, was desired to give up no portion of her own territory, nor even all that she had conquered; it was offered to restore to her all that had been taken from her; and when she rejected propositions of this nature, and preferred to their acceptance a continuance of the war, were we to be told of the unrelenting hostility of the



combined powers, for which France was to inflict vengeance on other countries, and which was to justify the subversion of every established government, and the destruction of property, religion, and domestic comfort, from one end of Italy to the other? Such was the effect of the war against Modena, against Genoa, against Tuscany, against Venice, against Rome, and against Naples; all of which France either engaged in, or prosecuted, subsequent to the period at which these terms of peace were offered.

In 1797, when France had reduced the powers of the Continent to a passive state, by a precarious peace, which left her in possession of all her conquests, Great Britain again renewed her pacific propositions, under different circumstances. She now had nothing to ask from France; she would have left her in possession of all her territories, natural and acquired; she offered to restore every thing which she had taken from France; and she only demanded, as some indemnification for herself, certain posts which had been wrested from Holland, and which were necessary for the security of the British possessions in the East.— This proposal, also, was proudly refused.

In further proof of the aggressive disposition of the French Republic, Mr. Pitt adverted



to her conduct in the invasion of a neutral and friendly country, the moment she was relieved from the pressure of the German war. He described the hapless fate of Switzerland in pathetic terms; and truly stated it, as stamping with an indelible mark of infamy, that systematic aggression, which had been prosecuted with an unrelenting spirit, which could not be subdued in adversity, which could not be appeased in prosperity, which neither solemn professions, nor the general law of nations, nor the obligations of treaties, whenever contracted, could restrain from the subversion of every state into which, either by force or fraud, their arms could penetrate. He then desired to be told, whether the disasters of Europe were to be charged upon the provocation of this country and its allies, or on the inherent principle of the French Revolution, of which the natural result produced so much misery and carnage in France, and carried desolation and terror over so large a portion of the world.

He next briefly alluded to the scandalous conduct of the French government towards America, stained with every mark of corruption, and every feature of injustice and tyranny; and then called the attention of the House to the attack upon Egypt and Malta. Inconsiderable as the island of Malta might be thought, in



comparison with the extensive countries which the arms of republican France had desolated, it was a territory, the government of which had long been recognized by every state of Europe, against which France pretended no cause of war, and whose independence was as dear to itself, and as sacred, as that of any country in Europe. It was, in fact, not unimportant, from its local situation, to the other powers of Europe, but, in proportion as its importance might be diminished, the instance would only serve the more to illustrate and confirm the proposition which Mr. Pitt had maintained. The all-searching eye of the French revolution looked to every part of Europe, and every quarter of the world, in which could be found an object either of acquisition, or of plunder. Nothing was too great for the temerity of its ambition, nothing too small or insignificant for the grasp of its rapacity. From Malta Buonaparté repaired to Egypt. The attack was made, pretences were held out by the French to the natives of that country, in the name of the French King, whom they had murdered; they pretended to have the approbation of the Grand Seignior, whose territories they were violating; their project was carried on by proclaiming that France had been reconciled to the Mussulman faith, had abjured that of christia-



nity, or, as Buonaparté, in his impious language, termed it, of *the sect of the Messiah!*

One principal cause of this unparalleled outrage was the acquisition of means for attacking the British power in India; but another, and a more potent, motive, as appeared by the French statements, was the division and partition of the territories of what they thought a falling power. This attack was accompanied, as has been seen, by an attempt on the English possessions in the East, made on true revolutionary principles. In Europe, the propagation of the principles of France had uniformly prepared the way for the progress of her arms. To India, the lovers of peace had sent the messengers of jacobinism, for the purpose of inculcating war in those distant regions, on jacobin principles, and of forming jacobin clubs, which they actually succeeded in establishing; and which, in most respects, resembled the European model, but which were distinguished by this peculiarity, that they were required to swear, in one breath, *hatred to tyranny, the love of liberty, and the destruction of all Kings and Sovereigns—except the good and faithful ally of the French Republic, CITIZEN TIPPPOO.*

Tracing this system to its source, Mr. Pitt truly described it as combining an insatiable love of aggrandizement, with an implacable spirit of



destruction, directed against all the civil and religious institutions of every country. This was the first moving and acting spirit of the French revolution; the spirit which gave it animation at its birth, the spirit which would not desert it till the moment of its dissolution; "which grew with its growth, and strengthened with its strength;" but which had not abated under its misfortunes, nor declined in its decay. It was the spirit which had actuated every successive ruler of the Republic from Brissot to Buonaparté. Its characters were not the effect of accident, but resulted from the alliance of the most horrid principles with the most horrid means. And hence arose all the miseries which had afflicted Europe.

The first fundamental principle of the revolution was to bribe the poor against the rich, by proposing to transfer into new hands, on the delusive notion of equality, and in breach of every principle of justice, the whole property of the country. The practical application of this principle was to devote the whole of that property to indiscriminate plunder, and to make it the foundation of a revolutionary system of finance, productive in proportion to the misery and desolation which it created. It had been accompanied by an unwearied spirit of proselytism, diffusing itself over all the nations of the



earth; a spirit which could apply itself to all circumstances and all situations; which could furnish a list of grievances, and hold out a promise of redress, equally to all nations; which inspired the teachers of French liberty with the hope of alike recommending themselves to those who lived under the feudal code of the German empire; to the various states of Italy, under all their different institutions; to the old Republicans of Holland; and to the new Republicans of America; to the Catholics of Ireland, whom it was to deliver from Protestant usurpation; to the Protestants of Switzerland, whom it was to release from Popish superstition; and to the Mussulmans of Egypt, whom it was to emancipate from Christian persecution; to the remote Indian, blindly bigotted to his ancient rites; and to the natives of Great Britain, enjoying the perfection of practical freedom, and justly attached to their constitution, from the joint result of habit, of reason, and of experience. The last distinguishing feature was a perfidy which nothing could bind, which no tie of treaty, no sense of the principles generally received among nations, no obligation, human or divine, could restrain. Thus qualified, thus armed for destruction, the genius of the French revolution marched forth, the terror and dismay of the world. Every nation had, in its



turn, been the witness, many had been the victims, of its principles; and it was left for Britons to decide, whether they would compromise with such a danger, while they had yet resources to supply the sinews of war, while the heart and spirit of the country was yet unbroken, and while they had the means of calling forth and supporting a powerful co-operation in Europe.

After this able sketch of the revolutionary character, and of its effects on the general state of the European commonwealth, Mr. Pitt described another part of its attributes, which had materially influenced him in rejecting the loose overtures of the French Consul; the instability of the government, which had been subject to perpetual fluctuations. Such, indeed, had been the incredible rapidity with which the revolutions in France had succeeded each other, that the names of those ephemeral demagogues who had exercised absolute power, under the pretence of liberty, might almost be numbered by the years of the revolution; and each of the new constitutions which, under the same pretence, had, in its turn, been imposed by force on France, every one of which was alike founded upon principles which professed to be universal, and was intended to be established and perpetuated among all the nations of the earth, would be



found, upon an average, to have each lasted about two years.

Under such a perpetual fluctuation and change, both in the form of the government, and in the persons of the rulers, Mr. Pitt contended no security either had been found, or could now be obtained. In proof of this position, he referred to the memorable speech of Boulay de la Meurthe, who, as has been seen, was selected to report to a legislative assembly, surrounded by a file of grenadiers, the new form of liberty which France was destined to enjoy, under the mild auspices of General Buonaparté. From this mouth and organ of the new government, the following important lesson proceeded.—“ It is easy to conceive why peace was not concluded before the establishment of the constitutional government. The only government which then existed described itself as revolutionary ; it was, in fact, only the tyranny of a few men who were soon overthrown by others, and it consequently presented no stability of principles or of views, no security either with respect to men, or with respect to things.

“ It should seem that that stability, and that security, ought to have resulted from the establishment, and to have been the effect, of the constitutional system ; and yet they did not exist more, perhaps even less, than they had



done before. In truth, we did make some partial treaties; we signed a Continental peace, and a general congress was held to confirm it, but these treaties, these diplomatic conferences, appear to have been the source of a new war, more inveterate and more sanguinary than before.

“ Before the 18th of Fructidor, (September 4th) of the 5th year, the French government exhibited to foreign nations so uncertain an existence that they refused to treat with it. After that great event, the whole power was absorbed in the Directory; the Legislative Body could hardly be said to have existed; treaties of peace were broken, and war carried every where, without its participation. The same Directory, after having intimidated all Europe, and destroyed, at its pleasure, several governments, not knowing how to make either peace or war, or even how to establish itself, was overturned by a breath, on the 13th of Prairial, (June 18th) to make room for other men, influenced, perhaps, by different views, or who might be governed by different principles. Judging, then, only from notorious facts, the French government must be considered as exhibiting nothing fixed, in respect either to men or to things.”

Such was the picture of France under all its successive governments, down to the period



of the last revolution, drawn by the hand of one of her own legislators; and such was the state of that country, with the rulers of which the Opposition had so repeatedly called upon the English Ministers to make peace, constantly insisting, that peace was not only practicable, but easy of attainment, and as secure as any treaty could be between long-established governments!

Mr. Pitt next examined the *present* state of France.—A change had taken place in the description and form of the sovereign authority; a supreme power was placed at the head of that nominal republic, with a more open avowal of military despotism than at any former period; with a more open and undisguised abandonment of the names and pretences under which that despotism long attempted to conceal itself. The different institutions, republican in their form and appearance, which were before the instruments of that despotism, were now annihilated; they had given way to the absolute power of one man, concentrating in himself all the authority of the state, and differing from other monarchs only in this—that, as Mr. Canning, with his peculiar felicity of expression, had truly stated it, he wielded a sword instead of a sceptre. What, then, was the confidence to be derived either from the



frame of the government, or from the character and past conduct of the person who was now the absolute ruler of France?

He asked the House, if they had seen a man, of whom they had no previous knowledge, suddenly invested with the sovereign authority of the country; entrusted with the power of taxation, with the power of the sword, the power of war and peace, the unlimited power of commanding the resources, of disposing of the lives and fortunes, of every man in France; if they had seen, at the same moment, all the inferior machinery of the revolution, which, under the variety of successive shocks, had kept the system in motion, still remaining entire; all that, by requisition and plunder, had given activity to the revolutionary system of finance, and had furnished the means of creating an army, by converting every man, who was of age to bear arms, into a soldier, not for the defence of his own country, but for the sake of carrying unprovoked war into surrounding countries; if they had seen all the subordinate instruments of Jacobin power subsisting in their full force, and retaining (to use the French phrase) all their original organization; and had then observed this single change in the conduct of their affairs, that there was now one man, with no rival to



thwart his measures, no colleague to divide his powers, no council to control his operations, no liberty of speaking or writing, no expression of public opinion, to check or to influence his conduct; under such circumstances, would they be wrong to pause, and wait for the evidence of facts and experience, before they consented to trust their safety to the forbearance of a single man, in such a situation, and to relinquish those means of defence which had hitherto carried them safe through all the storms of the revolution? and if they were to ask, what were the principles and character of this stranger, to whom Fortune had suddenly committed the concerns of a great and powerful nation?

But was this the real state of the present question?—Were they talking of a stranger of whom they had heard nothing?—No, they had heard of him; they and Europe, and the world, had heard both of him, and of the satellites by whom he was surrounded; and it was impossible, Mr. Pitt contended, to discuss fairly the propriety of any answer which could be returned to his overtures of negotiation, without taking into consideration the inferences to be drawn from his personal character and conduct. He knew it was the fashion of some to represent any reference to topics of this nature as



invidious and irritating; but the truth was, that they rose unavoidably out of the very nature of the question. Would it have been possible for Ministers to discharge their duty, in offering their advice to their Sovereign, either for accepting or declining negotiation, without taking into their account the reliance to be placed on the disposition and the principles of the person, on whose disposition and principles the security to be obtained by treaty must, in the present circumstances, principally depend? Would they act honestly or candidly towards Parliament, and towards the country, if, having been guided by these considerations, they forbore to state publicly, and distinctly, the real grounds which had influenced their decision; and if, from a false delicacy, they purposely declined the examination of a point the most essential towards enabling Parliament to form a just determination on so important a subject?

Having thus established the necessity of inquiring into the character and conduct of Napoleone Buonaparté, Mr. Pitt proceeded to trace him *ab ovo*, from the moment when he first emerged from meanness, and obscurity, to figure on the revolutionary stage, and to pave the way, through murder and desolation, to the Throne of the Bourbons. The Oppo-



sition had told the House, that the late overtures formed his *second attempt* at general pacification, and hence they inferred the reality of his pacific disposition. But how, Mr. Pitt asked, had this second attempt been conducted? There was, indeed, as Mr. Erskine had ingeniously discovered, a word in the first declaration which referred to general peace, and which stated this to be the second time in which the Consul had endeavoured to accomplish that object. The Ministers had thought fit, for the reasons assigned, to decline altogether the proposal for treating under the present circumstances, but, at the same time, they expressly stated, that, whenever the moment for treating should arrive, they would, in no case, treat but in conjunction with his Majesty's allies. This general refusal to negotiate, at the present moment, did not prevent the Consul from renewing his overtures; but were they renewed for the purpose of general pacification? Though he had hinted at a general peace in the terms of his first note; though Ministers had shewn, by their answer, that they deemed negotiation inadmissible; though they had added, that, even at any future period, they would treat only in conjunction with our allies; what was the proposal contained in his last note? To treat, not for a *general peace*, but



for a *separate peace* between Great Britain and France.

Such was the second attempt to effect a *general pacification*; a proposal for a *separate treaty* with Great Britain. What had been the first? The conclusion of a *separate treaty* with Austria; and, in addition to this fact, there were two anecdotes connected with the conclusion of that treaty, which were sufficient to illustrate the disposition of this pacificator of Europe. This very treaty of Campo Formio was ostentatiously professed to be concluded with the Emperor, for the purpose of enabling Buonaparté to take the command of the army of England, and to dictate a separate peace with this country on the banks of the Thames. But there was this additional circumstance, singular beyond all conception, considering that the House was now referred to the treaty of Campo Formio as a proof of the personal disposition of the Consul to general peace; he sent his two confidential, and chosen friends, *Berthier* and *Monge*, charged to communicate to the Directory this same treaty; to announce to them that one enemy was humbled, that the war with Austria was terminated, and, therefore, that now was the moment to prosecute their operations against England; they used, on this occasion, the memorable words,—“ *The*



*kingdom of Great Britain and the French Republic cannot exist together."* This was the solemn declaration of the deputies and ambassadors of Buonaparté himself, offering to the Directory the first fruits of this first attempt at general pacification.

Having removed the ground of this argument, Mr. Pitt called upon the House to follow Buonaparté through the different stages of the French revolution, in order to judge how far he was to be regarded as a security against revolutionary principles; and to determine what reliance could be placed on his engagements with other countries, by ascertaining how he had observed his engagements to his own. When the constitution of the third year was established under Barras, that Constitution, (as has been seen) was imposed by the arms of Buonaparté, then commanding the army of the Triumvirate in Paris. To that Constitution he solemnly swore fidelity. How often he had repeated the same oath Mr. Pitt professed not to know; but twice, at least, he knew, that he had not only repeated it himself, but had tendered it to others, under circumstances too striking not to be stated.

The House, Mr. Pitt observed, could not have forgotten the revolution of the fourth of



September, which produced the dismissal of Lord Malmesbury from Lille. How was that revolution procured? — Chiefly by the promise of Buonaparté (in the name of his army) decidedly to support the Directory in those measures which led to the infringement and violation of every thing which the authors of the Constitution of 1795, or its adherents, could consider as fundamental, and which established a system of despotism inferior only to that now realized in his own person. Immediately before this event, in the midst of the desolation and bloodshed of Italy, he had received the sacred present of new banners from the Directory;— he delivered them to his army with this exhortation: “Let us swear, fellow-soldiers, by the manes of the patriots who have died by our side, eternal hatred to the enemies of the constitution of the third year:” That very constitution which he soon after enabled the Directory to violate, and which, at the head of his grenadiers, he had now finally destroyed. Nay, that oath was again renewed in the midst of that very scene which was exhibited at Saint Cloud;— the oath of fidelity to the constitution of the third year was administered to all the members of the assembly then sitting, (under the terror



of the bayonet) as the solemn preparation for the business of the day; and the morning was ushered in with swearing attachment to the constitution, that the evening might close with its destruction.

Such was the fidelity which Buonaparté had displayed in the observance of what might be called his patriotic engagements; whence might be inferred, even without the evidence of facts, what would be his conduct in his treaties or engagements with foreign countries. But so many facts existed that the advantage afforded by this *inferential* argument could easily be dispensed with. Mr. Pitt truly stated, that if the House looked at the dreadful catalogue of all the breaches of treaty, all the acts of perfidy at which he had only glanced, and which were precisely commensurate with the number of treaties which the Republic had made; (for he had sought in vain for any one which it had made, and which it had not broken) if they traced the history of them all from the beginning of the revolution to the present time, or if they selected those which had been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty, and marked the most strongly with the characteristic features of the revolution, the name of Buonaparté would be found allied to more of them than that of any other man who could be handed



down in the history of the crimes and the miseries of the last ten years. His name would be recorded with the horrors committed in Italy, in the memorable campaign of 1796 and 1797, in the Milanese, in Genoa, in Modena, in Tuscany, in Rome, and in Venice.

Mr. Pitt proceeded to give a brief abstract of his enormities in many different states. After a short description of his conduct in the Milanese, in Modena, and the neighbouring country, and in Tuscany, he gave some account of his scandalous proceeding in Genoa, which afforded a striking instance of the revolutionary means employed for the destruction of independent governments. A French Minister was, at that time, resident at Genoa, which was acknowledged by France to be in a state of neutrality and friendship. In breach of this neutrality, Buonaparté began, in the year 1796, with the demand of a loan; he afterwards, from the month of September, required and enforced the payment of a monthly subsidy, to the amount which he thought proper to stipulate; these transactions were accompanied with repeated assurances and protestations of friendship; they were followed, in May, 1797, by a conspiracy against the government, fomented by the emissaries of the French embassy, and conducted by the partisans of France, encouraged and afterwards



protected by the French Minister. The conspirators failed in their first attempt; overpowered by the courage and voluntary exertions of the inhabitants, their force was dispersed, and many of their number were arrested. Buonaparté instantly considered the defeat of the conspirators as an act of aggression against the French Republic; he dispatched an aide-de-camp with an order to the Senate of this Independent State; first, to release all the French who were detained; secondly, to punish those who had arrested them; thirdly, to declare that they had had no share in the insurrection; and fourthly, to disarm the people. Several French prisoners were immediately released, and a proclamation was preparing to disarm the inhabitants, when, by a second note, Buonaparté required the arrest of the three Inquisitors of State, and immediate alterations in the constitution; he accompanied this with an order to the French Minister to quit Genoa, if his commands were not immediately carried into execution; at the same moment his troops entered the territory of the Republic, and, shortly after, the councils, intimidated and overpowered, abdicated their functions. Three deputies were then sent to Buonaparté, to receive from him a new constitution; on the 6th of June, after the conferences at Montebello, he signed a con-



vention, or rather issued a decree, by which he fixed the new form of their government; he, himself, named, provisionally, all the members who were to compose it, and he required the payment of seven millions of livres, (about £300,000 sterling) as the price of the subversion of their constitution, and their independence. These transactions required but one short comment; it was to be found in the official account, given of them at Paris, in the following memorable words: "General Buonaparté has pursued the only line of conduct which could be allowed in the representative of a nation, which has supported the war only to procure the solemn acknowledgment of the right of nations to change the form of their government. He contributed nothing towards the revolution of Genoa, but he seized the first moment to acknowledge the new government, as soon as he saw that it was the result of the wishes of the people."\*

It was unnecessary, Mr. Pitt thought, to dwell on the wanton attacks against Rome, under the direction of Buonaparté himself, in the year 1796, and in the beginning of 1797, which led, first, to the treaty of Tolentino, concluded by Buonaparté, in which, by enor-

\* *Le Redacteur Officiel*, June 30, 1797.



mous sacrifices, the Pope was allowed to purchase the acknowledgement of his authority as a Sovereign Prince; and secondly, to the violation of that very treaty, and to the subversion of the papal authority by Joseph Buonaparté, the brother and the Agent of the General, and the Minister of the French Republic to the Holy See: a transaction accompanied by outrages and insults towards the pious and venerable Pontiff, (in spite of the sanctity of his age, and the unsullied purity of his character) which, even to a Protestant, seemed hardly short of the guilt of sacrilege.

But, of all the disgusting and tragical scenes which took place in Italy, in the course of this period, those which passed at Venice were, perhaps, the most striking, and the most characteristic. In May, 1796, the French army, under Buonaparté, in the full tide of its success against the Austrians, first approached the territories of this republic, which, from the commencement of the war, had observed a rigid neutrality. Their entrance on these territories was, as usual, accompanied by a solemn proclamation in the name of their General. — “Buonaparté, to the Republic of Venice;—it is to deliver the finest country in Europe from the iron yoke of the proud House of Austria, that the French army has braved ob-



stacles the most difficult to surmount. Victory, in union with justice, has crowned its efforts. The wreck of the enemy's army has retired behind the Mincio. The French army, in order to follow them, passes over the territory of the Republic of Venice; but it will never forget that ancient friendship unites the two Republics. Religion, government, customs, and property, shall be respected. That the people may be without apprehension, the most severe discipline shall be maintained. All that may be provided for the army shall be faithfully paid for in money. The General-in-chief engages the officers of the Republic of Venice, the Magistrates, and the Priests, to make known these sentiments to the people, in order that confidence may cement that friendship which has so long united the two nations, faithful in the path of honour, as in that of victory. The French soldier is terrible only to the enemies of his liberty and his government—Buonaparté."

This proclamation was followed by exactions similar to those which were practised against Genoa, by the renewal of similar professions of friendship, and the use of similar means to excite insurrection. At length, in the Spring of 1797, occasion was taken, from disturbances thus excited, to forge, in the name



of the Venetian government, a proclamation,\* hostile to France; and this proceeding was made the ground for military execution against the country, and for effecting, by force, the subversion of its ancient government, and the establishment of the democratic forms of the French revolution. This revolution was sealed by a treaty, signed in May, 1797, between Buonaparté and Commissioners appointed on the part of the new Revolutionary Government of Venice. By the second and third secret articles of this treaty, Venice agreed to give, as a ransom, or rather to purchase an exemption from all further exactions or demands, the sum of three millions of livres, (about £125,000 sterling) the value of three millions more in articles of naval supply, and three ships of the line; and it received in return assurances of the friendship and support of the French Republic. Immediately after the signature of this treaty, the arsenal, the library, and the palace of Saint Mark, were ransacked and plundered, and heavy additional contributions were imposed upon the inhabitants; and, in not more than four months afterwards, this very Republic of Venice, united by alliance to France, the crea-

\* See an account of this transaction in the *Proclamation of the Senate of Venice*, April 12, 1798.



ture of Buonaparté himself, from whom it had received the present of French liberty, was, by the same Buonaparté, transferred, under the treaty of Campo Formio, to "that iron yoke of the proud House of Austria," to deliver it from which he had represented, in his first proclamation, to be the great object of all his operations.

All this was followed by the memorable expedition into Egypt, which Mr. Pitt mentioned, not merely because it formed a principal article in the catalogue of those acts of violence and perfidy in which Buonaparté had been engaged; not merely because it was an enterprise peculiarly his own, of which he was himself the planner, the executor, and the betrayer; but chiefly because, when he returned from that country to a different scene, to take possession of a new Throne, from which he was to speak upon an equality with the Kings and Governors of Europe, he left behind him, at the moment of his departure, a specimen, which could not be mistaken, of his principles of negotiation. The *intercepted correspondence* seemed to afford the strongest grounds for believing, that his offers to the Turkish Government to evacuate Egypt were made solely with a view "*to gain time,*" that the ratification of any treaty on this subject was to be delayed with the view of



finally eluding its performance, if any change of circumstances, favourable to the French, should occur in the interval. But whatever might be thought of the intention with which these offers were made, there would, at least, be no question with respect to the credit due to the professions by which he endeavoured to prove, in Egypt, his pacific disposition. He expressly enjoined his successor, strongly and steadily to insist, in all his intercourse with the Turks, that he came to Egypt with no hostile design, and that he never meant to keep possession of the country; while, on the opposite page of the same instructions, he stated, in the most unequivocal manner, his regret at the discomfiture of his favourite project of colonizing Egypt, and of maintaining it as a territorial acquisition. Now if, in any note addressed to the Grand Vizier, or the Sultan, Buonaparté had claimed credit for the sincerity of his professions, that he forcibly invaded Egypt with no view hostile to Turkey, and solely for the purpose of molesting the British interests, was there any one argument now used to induce the House to believe his present professions to England, which might not have been equally urged, on that occasion, to the Turkish Government? Would not those professions have been equally supported by solemn



asseverations, by the same reference which was now made to personal character, with this single difference, that they would then have been accompanied with one instance less of that perfidy, which there had been occasion to trace in this very transaction?

Mr. Pitt pressed this argument with considerable ingenuity and force, and then considered the plea, that it was now the *interest* of Buonaparté to make peace with England. That he had an interest in making peace, Mr. Pitt thought, was, at best, but a doubtful proposition; and that he had an interest in preserving it, he regarded as still more uncertain. He did not deny that it was his interest to *negotiate*, and, above all, to engage this country in a separate negotiation, in order to loosen and dissolve the whole system of the confederacy on the Continent; to palsy, at once, the arms of Russia or of Austria, or of any other country that might look to England for support; and then either to break off his separate treaty, or, if he should have concluded it, to apply the lesson which was taught in his school of policy in Egypt; and to revive, at his pleasure, those claims of indemnification which might *have been reserved for some future opportunity*.

This was precisely the interest which he had in negotiation; but on what grounds were



Ministers to be convinced that he had an interest in concluding and observing a solid and permanent pacification? Under all the circumstances of his personal character, and his newly-acquired power, what other security had he for retaining that power, but the sword? His hold upon France was the sword, and he had no other. Was he connected with the soil, or with the habits, the affections, or the prejudices, of the country? He was a stranger, a foreigner, and an usurper; he united in his own person every thing that a pure Republican must detest; every thing that an enraged Jacobin had abjured; every thing that a sincere and faithful royalist must feel as an insult. If he was opposed at any time in his career, what was his appeal? *He appealed to his fortune*;—in other words, to his army and his sword. Placing, then, his whole reliance upon military support, could he afford to let his military renown pass away, to let his laurels wither, to let the memory of his achievements sink in obscurity? Was it certain that, with his army confined within France, and restrained from inroads upon her neighbours, he could maintain, at his devotion, a force sufficiently numerous to support his power? Having no object but the possession of absolute dominion, no passion but military glory, was it certain that he could feel such an interest in per-



manent peace, as would justify this country in laying down her arms, reducing her expence, and relinquishing her means of security, on the faith of his engagements? Would it be believed, that, after the conclusion of peace, he would not still sigh over the lost trophies of Egypt, wrested from him by the celebrated victory of Aboukir, and the brilliant exertions of that heroic band of British seamen, whose influence and example rendered the Turkish troops invincible at Acra? Could he forget that the effect of these exploits enabled Austria and Russia, in one campaign, to recover from France all which she had acquired by his victories, to dissolve the charm which, for a time, had fascinated Europe, and to shew that their Generals, contending in a just cause, could efface, even by their success and their military glory, the most dazzling triumphs of his victories and desolating ambition?

Could it be believed, that, with these impressions on his mind, if, after a year, eighteen months, or two years, of peace had elapsed, he should be tempted by the appearance of a fresh insurrection in Ireland, encouraged by renewed and unrestrained communication with France, and fomented by the fresh infusion of Jacobin principles; if we were, at such a moment, without a fleet to watch the ports of France,



or to guard the coasts of Ireland, without a disposable army, or an embodied militia, capable of supplying a speedy and adequate reinforcement, and that he had the means of suddenly transporting thither a body of twenty or thirty thousand French troops; could it be believed, that, at such a moment, his ambitious and vindictive spirit would be restrained by the recollection of engagements, or the obligation of treaty? Or, if in some new crisis of difficulty and danger to the Ottoman Empire, with no British navy in the Mediterranean, no confederacy formed, no force collected to support it, an opportunity should present itself for resuming the abandoned expedition to Egypt, for renewing the avowed and favourite project of conquering and colonizing that rich and fertile country, and of acquiring the means of wounding some of the vital parts of English prosperity, and to plunder the treasures of the East, in order to fill the bankrupt coffers of France, would it be the interest of Buonaparté, under such circumstances, or his principles, his moderation, his love of peace, his aversion from conquest, and his regard for the independence of other nations;—would it be all, or any of these, that would secure England against an attempt, which would leave her only the option of submitting, without a struggle, to certain



loss and disgrace, or of renewing the contest which she had prematurely terminated, and renewing it without allies, without preparation, with diminished means, and with increased difficulty and hazard?

It was clear then, that no grounds of security, for the rigid observance of a treaty of peace, could be derived from either the professions, the character, or the conduct, of the First Consul of France. It remained, then, to consider whether the probable stability of his power could supply this deficiency. The arguments which Mr. Pitt advanced, on this part of the question, were strong and ingenious; founded on the experience of past times; and theoretically just. But as, unhappily, though true in their general application, as well as in the principle whence they were derived, they have proved inapplicable to the particular case of the Corsican Usurper, who, whether he be an instrument in the hand of that being, who, in his mysterious dispensations, which, in their origin and progress, elude human penetration, defeat human sagacity, and mock human wisdom, to work good out of evil, or to whatever cause it may be imputable, has baffled every argument which reason could suggest, knowledge could recommend, or eloquence enforce, it becomes needless to repeat them.



But, though Mr. Pitt's deductions from the History of the World have proved inapplicable to the particular case to which, in this instance, they were applied; they were not less just, nor founded in less true and solid principles, than one of the positions of the first promoters of the French revolution, that the force of standing armies was vain and delusive, and that no artificial power could resist the effects of public opinion. Yet, just and true in theory, and justified by the experience of past ages, as this position unquestionably was, it, nevertheless, stands contradicted and belied, by the whole course of the French revolution. France, so far from exhibiting a proof of the predominant power of public opinion over military force, supplies the strongest exception to the doctrine. Through every stage of the revolution, from the deposition of the Sixteenth Louis to the establishment of the Imperial usurpation, in the person of the Corsican, military force, and that alone, has governed; and public opinion, like "the still small voice of conscience," has scarcely been heard. Mr. Pitt, however, considered this as an exception only to a general truth; he still believed that, in every civilized country, (not enslaved by a jacobin faction) public opinion was the only sure support of any government; and he believed it with the more



satisfaction, from a conviction, that, if the present contest should be brought to a happy conclusion, the established governments of Europe would stand upon that rock firmer than ever; and whatever might be the defects of any particular constitution, those who lived under it would prefer its continuance to the experiment of changes which might plunge them in the unfathomable abyss of revolution, or extricate them from it, only to expose them to the terrors of military despotism. Volumes, indeed, have been written, in support of the paramount influence of public opinion on the political, and moral state of the civilized world; and facts had occurred to shake the beneficial doctrine thus sought to be inculcated, till the appearance of that phenomenon, the French Revolution, which has set all reason, and all experience, at defiance; unless, indeed, Mr. Sheridan's assertion be correct, that the revolution in the British government, in 1688, was carried by an inconsiderable minority, against the great mass of the community.

To prevent false inferences from being drawn by his political opponents, from his objections to treat with Buonaparté at the present moment, Mr. Pitt took care specifically to state, that a time might arrive when it would be expedient to treat with him. If there should



be an appearance that the policy of France was, at length, guided by different maxims from those which had hitherto prevailed; if signs of stability should afterwards be seen in the government, which were not now to be traced; if the progress of the allied army should not call forth such a spirit in France, as to make it probable that the act of the country itself would destroy the system now prevailing; if the danger, the difficulty, the risk, of continuing the contest should increase, while the hope of complete ultimate success should be diminished; all these, in their true place, were considerations which, with himself, and (he could answer for it) with every one of his colleagues, would have their just weight. But, at present, these considerations all operated one way; and there was no reasonable ground to expect such a change as would justify the hope of security, in the present state of affairs in France.

As Mr. Pitt had been asked, in the course of this debate, whether he thought he could impose monarchy upon France against the will of the nation? he said, "I never thought it, I never hoped it, I never wished it; I have thought, I have hoped, I have wished, that the time might come, when the effect of the arms of the allies might so far overpower the mili-



tary force which keeps France in bondage, as to give vent and scope to the thoughts and actions of its inhabitants." Abundant proofs, indeed, had been already seen of the real disposition of a large part of the country; almost through the whole of the revolution the Western provinces of France had been deluged with the blood of its inhabitants, obstinately contending for their ancient laws and religion. The recent revival of that war had furnished a fresh instance of the zeal which still animated these provinces in the same cause. Here Mr. Pitt contradicted a fact which had often been advanced by the French, and by their advocates in England, and stated distinctly, and said there were some persons near him, who could bear witness to the truth of the statement, that these efforts of the Royalists, in La Vendée, were not produced by any instigation from England; they were the effects of a rooted sentiment prevailing throughout that district, forced into action by the *Law of the Hostages*, and the other tyrannical measures of the Directory, at the moment when the English Ministers were endeavouring to discourage so hazardous an enterprize.

It had been urged, by Mr. Erskine, as an argument against any fresh change, in France, favourable to monarchy, that every landed pro-



prietor in France would support the existing order of things in that country from the same motive that he, and every proprietor of three per cent. stock, would join in the defence of the British Constitution. Mr. Pitt shewed that a mode might be easily adopted for satisfying the present proprietors in France, without preventing the restoration of the Emigrants to their former rights, provided there was a disposition in the people to restore the monarchy. He then adverted to the nature of the argument which Mr. Erskine had employed, and which he had strengthened with the weight of his own personal authority. Mr. Pitt said, he must do him the justice to believe, that the habits of his profession must supply him with better and nobler motives for defending a Constitution which he had had so much occasion to study and to examine, than any which he could derive from the value of his possessions, however large, in the three per cents.\* even

\* By thus making *interest* the rule of political conduct, and the measure of obedience to the state, Mr. Erskine subjected himself to an obvious question, which, however, the liberal spirit of his opponent would not stoop to put. It was generally understood, that Mr. Erskine had, before this period, vested a very large proportion of the fruits of his professional labours, in the American funds; it might have been asked, then, in the event of a war between England and America,



supposing them to continue to increase in price as rapidly as they had done, during the last three years, in which the security and prosperity of the country had been established by the pursuit of a system in direct opposition to the councils of Mr. Erskine and his friends.

Mr. Pitt then took a brief view of the state of the French finances, in order to shew that the monied men in France had no reason to be satisfied with the present order of things. The French five per cent. stock was, at this time, higher than it had been, and every *hundred* pounds would now produce *seventeen* pounds in the market. Such was the value of revolutionary property !

In compromise and treaty with the present revolutionary power of France, placed in the hands of Buonaparté, and retaining the same means of annoyance which it then possessed, Mr. Pitt saw little hope of concluding such a peace as would justify that liberal intercourse which was the essence of real amity ; no chance of terminating the expences or the anxieties of war, or of restoring to the country any of the involving the destruction of the constitution of one of the two countries, in defence of *which* would Mr. Erskine, acceding to his own principle, feel himself disposed to fight ? Arguing, upon his own ground, there would be little hesitation in admitting the supposition, that the English *three per cents.* would, in such a *constitutional* struggle, have little chance against the American *six per cents.*



advantages of established tranquillity; and, as a sincere lover of peace, he could not be content with its *nominal* attainment; he must be desirous of pursuing that system which promised to attain, in the end, the permanent enjoyment of its solid and substantial blessings for this country, and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace, he would not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow, when the reality was not substantially within his reach.—“*Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest.*”

In answer to an observation which had been made on his apparent inconsistency, in having opened a negotiation in 1797, and in refusing to negotiate now, Mr. Pitt declared himself desirous of stating, frankly and openly, the true motives which had induced him to concur in recommending the former negotiation; and he would leave it to the House, and to the country, to judge whether his conduct, at that time, was inconsistent with the principles by which he was now guided. That revolutionary policy which he had described, that gigantic system of prodigality and bloodshed by which the efforts of France were supported, and which counted for nothing the lives and the property of a nation, had, at that period, driven us to exertions which had, in a great measure, exhausted the ordinary means of defraying our immense expenditure, and had led many of those who were the most convinced of the original justice



and necessity of the war, and of the danger of jacobin principles, to doubt the possibility of persisting in it, till complete and adequate security could be obtained. There seemed too much reason to believe, that, without some new measure to check the rapid accumulation of debt, we could no longer trust to the stability of that funding system by which the nation had been enabled to support the expence of all the different wars in which we had been engaged in the course of that century. In order to continue our exertions with vigour, it became necessary that a new and solid system of finance should be established, such as could not be rendered effectual but by the general and decided concurrence of public opinion. Such a concurrence in the strong and vigorous measures necessary for the purpose could not then be expected, but by satisfying the country, by the strongest and most decided proofs, that peace, on terms in any degree admissible, was unattainable.

Under this impression, Ministers had thought it their duty to attempt negotiation, not from the sanguine hope, even at that time, that its result could afford us complete security, but from the persuasion, that the danger arising from peace, under such circumstances, was less than that of continuing the war with precarious and inadequate means. The result of those negotiations proved, that the enemy would be



satisfied with nothing less than the sacrifice of the honour and independence of the country. From this conviction, a spirit and enthusiasm were excited in the nation, which produced the efforts to which we were indebted for the subsequent change in our situation. Having witnessed that happy change, having observed the increasing prosperity and security of the country from that period, seeing how much more satisfactory the prospects now were than any which could then have been derived from the successful result of negotiation, he had not scrupled to declare, that he considered the rupture of the negotiation, on the part of the enemy, as a fortunate circumstance for the country. But, because such were his sentiments, at this time, after reviewing what had since passed, did it follow that he was, at that period, insincere in his endeavours to obtain peace? Mr. Erskine, indeed, had assumed that he was, and he even made a concession, of which Mr. Pitt did not desire to claim the benefit;—he was willing to admit, that, on the Minister's principles, and on his view of the subject, insincerity would have been justifiable. Mr. Pitt knew no plea that could justify those who were entrusted with the conduct of public affairs, in holding out to the Parliament, and to the nation, one object, while they were, in fact, pursuing another. He did, in fact, believe, at the moment, the conclusion of peace (if it could



have been obtained) to be preferable to the continuance of the war, under its increasing risks and difficulties. He, therefore, wished for peace; and he sincerely laboured to obtain it; but his endeavours were frustrated by the act of the enemy. If, then, the circumstances were since changed, if what passed at that period had afforded a proof that the object aimed at was unattainable; and if all that had passed since had demonstrated, that, if peace had been then made, it would not have been durable, was he bound to repeat the same experiment, when every reason against it was strengthened by subsequent experience, and when the inducements, which led to it at that time, had ceased to exist?

Mr. Pitt observed, that the country was now possessed of ample resources, pecuniary and military, for carrying on the war till such time as peace could be concluded with a prospect of security and permanence. If we ultimately failed in the full attainment of our object, and were disappointed in our most sanguine hopes, we were more likely to gain than to lose, by the continuation of the contest. Its prolongation, even if it should not lead to the final destruction of the Jacobin system, must tend so far to weaken and exhaust it, as to give us, at least, a greater comparative security in any other termination of the war.— On all these grounds, that was not the moment



at which it was consistent with our interest, or our duty, to listen to any proposals for negotiation with the present ruler of France; but the Ministers were not, therefore, pledged to any unalterable determination as to their future conduct. In that, they must be regulated by the course of events, and it would be their duty, from time to time, to adapt their measures to any variation of circumstances, to consider how far the effects of the military operations of the allies, or of the internal disposition of France, corresponded with the present expectations of the country; and, on a view of the whole, to compare the difficulties, or risks, which might arise in the prosecution of the contest, with the prospect of ultimate success, or of the degree of advantage which might be derived from its further continuance, and to be governed by the result of all these considerations in the opinion and advice which they might offer to their Sovereign.

Mr. Fox answered the Minister, and condemned him for not having given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which had been *fairly* and *handsomely* made to him. By not having told Buonaparté, that he was desirous that the negotiation should include all the allies of England, as the means of bringing about a general peace, he had shewed his fears that the proposal would be acceded to. The people, he was convinced, were all anxious for



peace, and, if it were not for the restrictive laws which deprived them of the power of speech and of writing, they would express their opinion loudly and decidedly on the subject. He knew, that it was only by public opinion, not by a sense of duty, not by the inclination of their minds, that Ministers would ever be brought to give peace to the nation. The House divided on the question, when there appeared for the address, moved by Mr. Dundas, two hundred and sixty-five votes, and sixty-four against it.

A Message was delivered to Parliament, soon after, from the King, apprizing them that he was employed in concerting measures with the Emperor of Germany, and other Continental powers, for prosecuting the war with vigour; when Mr. Pitt (on the 17th of February) moved, that a sum not exceeding half a million should be granted to his Majesty, to enable him to make such advances as might be necessary for the purpose of insuring, at an early period, the vigorous co-operation of the Emperor of Germany, the Elector of Bavaria, and other powers, in the ensuing campaign, against the common enemy.

To this motion Mr. Tierney, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. William Smith, and several other Members of the Opposition, strongly objected, some on the ground that the Continental powers ought to fight their own battles, without the aid of British gold; and others, because it tended to



prolong a war which they wished to terminate, at all hazards. Mr. Tierney made a peremptory call upon Ministers to define the object of the war. It was not, he said, the destruction of Jacobin principles; it might be the restoration of the House of Bourbon; but he wished Mr. Pitt, in one sentence, to state, if he could, without his *ifs* and *buts*, and special pleading ingenuity, what the object was. He was persuaded he could not; and that he called on the House to prosecute the war, and to lavish the blood and treasure of the country in its support, when no one plain satisfactory reason could be given for its continuance.

This observation appeared to Mr. Pitt one of the strangest he had ever heard advanced. Mr. Tierney defied him to state, in one sentence, what was the object of the war. He did not know whether he could do this in one *sentence*; but, in one word, he could tell him, that it was **SECURITY**,— security against a danger, the greatest that ever threatened the world. It was security against a danger which never existed in any past period of society. It was security against a danger which, in degree and extent, was never equalled; against a danger which threatened all the nations of the earth; against a danger which had been resisted by all the powers of Europe, and resisted by none with so much success as by this country, because by none had it been resisted so uniformly, and with so



much energy. England alone, of all the nations of Europe, presented barriers the best fitted to resist its progress. We alone recognized the necessity of open war, as well with the principles, as with the practice, of the French revolution. We saw that it was to be resisted no less by arms abroad, than by precautions at home; that we were to look for protection no less to the courage of our forces, than to the wisdom of our councils; no less to military effort, than to legislative enactment. At the moment when those who now admitted the dangers of jacobinism, while they contended that it was extinct, used to palliate its atrocity, and extenuate its mischief, the House wisely saw that it was necessary to erect a double safeguard against a danger that wrought no less by undisguised hostility than by secret machination. But how long was it that Mr. Tierney, and his friends, had discovered that the dangers of jacobinism had ceased to exist? How long was it since they found that the cause of the French revolution was not the cause of liberty? How, or when, did Mr. Tierney discover that the jacobinism of Robespierre, of Barrere, the jacobinism of the five Directors, which he acknowledged to be real, had all vanished, and disappeared, because it had all been centered, and condensed into one man, who was reared and nursed in its bosom, whose celebrity was gained under its auspices, who was at once the



child and the champion of all its atrocities and horrors. Our security in negotiation was to be this Buonaparté, who was now the sole organ of all that was formerly dangerous and pestiferous in the revolution. Jacobinism was allowed to have formerly existed, because the power was divided. Now it was single, and no longer lived. The discovery was new, and Mr. Pitt did not know how it was made.

When Mr. Tierney asked, whether the war was to be carried on till jacobinism was finally extinguished, if he meant that war was to be continued until jacobinism had either lost its sting, or had its power of doing evil abridged, Mr. Pitt said, that this was the object of our exertions. He did not say, that war must be waged until the principle of jacobinism should be extinguished in the mind of every individual; were that the object of the contest, he was afraid it could not terminate but with the present generation. He was afraid that a mind once tainted with that infection never recovered its healthful state. He was afraid that no purification would be sufficient to eradicate the poison of that foul distemper. Even those who now so loudly told the House that the danger of jacobinism was past were endeavouring to disarm them of the means of carrying on the war, which they were waging against its remnant, by those arts which they employed for bending them down before its meridian



splendour. They told them again that, by resisting that pestilent mischief, they were promoting distress, they were despising humanity. They told them that they had spent above two hundred millions for a phrase—for the words “just and necessary.” “I hope, Sir,” said Mr. Pitt, “that the people of this country will not be governed by words.—No, Sir, the people of England will not be so misled. We have spent two hundred millions; but what has been the object;—what have been the fruits of this expenditure? If this country has spent two hundred millions, they have been spent to preserve the sources of its prosperity, its happiness, its glory, its freedom. Yes, Sir, we have spent that sum; and, I trust, we are ready, as I am sure we are able, to spend two hundred millions more for purposes so great and important. I trust this country is ready to exert its efforts to avail ourselves of the assistance of our allies to obtain real security, and solid peace.”

Mr. Pitt examined another ground of argument assumed by Mr. Tierney, who had said that the war could not be just, because it was carried on for the restoration of the House of Bourbon;\* and, secondly, that it could not be

\* Whatever Mr. Tierney's ideas might be of the justice of the attempt to secure to the Princes of the House of Bourbon the Throne of their ancestors, it is most certain, that the British nation had formally, and repeatedly, guaranteed, in the most solemn manner, the possession of the Throne of France to the Princes of that House.

By the second article of the treaty of Paris, concluded in



necessary, because Ministers had refused to negotiate for peace when an opportunity for negotiation was offered them. As to the first proposition, Mr. Tierney had assumed the foundation of the argument, and had left no ground

1783, "the triple alliance of the Hague of 1717, and the quadruple alliance of London, 1718," (with other treaties therein specified) are declared to "serve as the basis of that treaty; and, for this purpose, they were both renewed and confirmed, in the best form." These treaties, then, were in full force at the period of the deposition of Louis XVI. By the treaty of Utrecht, the Kings of England and France reciprocally guaranteed their respective rights to the Thrones which they filled; but, in the triple alliance of 1717, they went still farther, for, by the seventh article of that treaty, it was stipulated, that, "if the kingdoms (of France or England) *be disturbed by intestine quarrels, or by rebellions on account of the said successions, or under any other pretence whatever, the ally, thus in trouble, shall have full right to demand the succours therein above-mentioned,*" that is to say, each nation was to furnish to the other, on demand, in such an event, 8,000 foot and 2,000 horse. And, by the fourth article of the quadruple alliance, signed in 1718, to which England, France, Holland, and the German empire, were parties, England, and the two other powers, "promise to guarantee and defend *the right of succession to the kingdom of France, against all persons whatsoever, who may presume to disturb the order of the said succession.*"

Now, as these treaties were solemnly renewed and confirmed by the treaty of Paris, (and their renewal and confirmation were, at that period, sanctioned with the approbation of Mr. Fox and his friends) it follows, of course, that Louis XVI. when his Throne was attacked by rebels, had a right to call on the British nation to defend it with a force of 10,000 men; and that, so far from acting unjustly by a ready compliance with such a demand, the government could not have resisted it without a palpable breach of treaty, a manifest violation of good faith, and a flagrant act of injustice.

This subject is ably discussed in a letter addressed to me, in 1800, by my late worthy and learned friend, the Reverend John Brand, "*on Buonaparté's proposals for opening a negotiation for peace, in which the British guarantee of the Crown of France to the House of Bourbon, contained in the triple and quadruple alliances, and renewed by the treaty of the year 1783, is considered; together with the conduct of our national parties relating to it.*"



for controverting it, or for explanation, because he said that any attempt at explanation upon that subject was the mere ambiguous unintelligible language of *ifs* and *buts*, and of special pleading. "Now, Sir," said Mr. Pitt, "I never had much liking to special pleading; and, if ever I had any, it is, by this time, almost entirely gone. He has besides so abridged me of the use of particles, that, though I am not particularly attached to the sound of an *if* or a *but*, I would be much obliged to the honourable Gentleman if he would give me some others to supply their places. Is this, however, a light matter, that it should be treated in so light a manner? The restoration of the French monarchy, I will still tell the honourable Gentleman, I consider as a most desirable object, because I think it would afford the strongest and best security to this country and to Europe. *But* this object may not be attainable; and *if* it be not attainable, we must be satisfied with the best security which we can find independent of it. Peace is most desirable to this country; *but* negotiation may be attended with greater evils than could be counter-balanced by any benefits which would result from it. And *if* this be found to be the case; *if* it afford no prospect of security; *if* it threaten all the evils which we have been long struggling to avert; *if* the prosecution of the war afford the prospect of attaining complete security; and *if* it



may be prosecuted with increasing commerce, with increasing means, and with increasing prosperity, except what may result from the visitations of the Seasons; then, I say, that it is prudent in us not to negotiate at the present moment.—These are my *but*s and my *ifs*. This is my plea, and on no other do I wish to be tried, by God and my Country.”

During this discussion, a subject wholly foreign from it had been introduced into the debate, by Mr. Nicholl, the ingenious Gentleman who, on a former occasion, had committed a trifling mistake about a parliamentary precedent which made *against* his argument instead of making *for* it, as he had supposed, and stated. This subject was the existing scarcity of corn, which, owing to two unfavourable seasons, prevailed to a considerable extent. The subject had been taken up by the Parliament, at an early period of the Session; and the Government had adopted every practicable measure to avert the dreadful effects of so alarming a calamity. The *Patriots*, however, discovered, even in this national affliction, a ground for exultation, and a means of promoting their views. They thought that, as the Government would be reduced to the necessity of expending large sums for the importation of foreign grain to supply the existing deficiency, there would not remain a sufficiency



of the public revenue for the support of the war. And hence, they concluded, naturally enough, that Ministers would be compelled to throw themselves at the feet of the Corsican Usurper, and to subscribe to any terms which he might, in his wisdom and justice, chuse to impose on the country. They were aware, too, that, at all events, if they could persuade the people, that the scarcity was owing to the war, their own efforts would not fail to be powerfully assisted by popular clamour. Mr. Nicholl, impressed with these ideas, had triumphantly stated, and, as Mr. Pitt observed, with a gravity which seemed to testify his sincerity in what he advanced, that *twelve millions* would be necessary to procure that supply of grain which this country required. Mr. Pitt trusted, that it would appear, in the consideration of the report of the Corn Committee, that there had already been a very considerable supply of corn obtained, and that there was not so much to be apprehended on the score of scarcity as some supposed. But, besides that Mr. Nicholl had exaggerated the supply that would be required, he inferred, that we should not be able to find pecuniary resources both for the war, and to obviate the danger of scarcity. Doubtless, however, there was no difficulty in supplying both demands. No man, who thought the war right and politic, would suppose that



those supplies which were necessary to support it with vigour, and to bring it to a successful termination, should be withholden, because there happened to exist a scarcity which had no connection with the war, and which the prosecution of it could in no way affect. The fallacy of ascribing that scarcity to the war, was no less unfounded in reasoning than it was mischievous in its consequences. Mr. Pitt was the more induced to testify thus publicly the disapprobation which such language excited in his mind, when he observed the insidious use that was made of it, in promoting certain measures out of doors ; a language, indeed, contrary to all honest principle, and repugnant to every sentiment of public duty. The proposed subsidies were opposed only by nineteen votes, and supported by one hundred and sixty-two.

The Opposition, during this session, pursued the same line of conduct which they had observed, almost invariably, from the beginning of the contest, by harassing Ministers with perpetual questions on the precise object of the war, with a view to betray them into some unguarded admissions, which might supply a ground for exciting a popular outcry against them ; and with frequent resolutions, the object of which was to compel them to open a negotiation with the enemy. Three distinct motions, of this kind, were submitted to the



House of Commons, before the Parliament was prorogued. The first, by Mr. Tierney, who moved, on the last day of February, "that it was the opinion of the House, that it was both unjust and unnecessary to carry on the war, for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France;" the second, by Mr. Johnes, to the same effect, on the eighth of May; and the third, on the ninth of July, by Mr. Western. All these motions produced discussions, in which the Ministers took little part; and in which the same arguments which had been confuted, a hundred times, were again urged, with confidence undismayed by resistance, and undiminished by defeat; and they were all rejected by great and decisive majorities.

The means of raising the supplies for the year were laid before the House of Commons, on the 24th of February. They amounted to £39,500,000. The Income Tax afforded £5,300,000 towards this sum, besides £1,700,000, which was assigned, out of its produce, for the payment of a part of the interest of a loan of £18,500,000, which, with the casual, permanent, and other taxes, together with three millions, paid by the Bank, for the renewal of their charter, a vote of credit to the same amount, and five millions and a half of surplus from the consolidated fund,



supplied the whole expences of the year. The only interest remaining to be provided for by new taxes, was £313,000; and this was defrayed by a new duty of five per cent. on all kinds of tea, and a small augmentation of the duties on rum and brandy.

The failure of the expedition to Holland was made a subject of Parliamentary discussion, in both Houses, in the month of February. On the tenth, Mr. Sheridan introduced a motion for an inquiry into that business; and, two days after, it was brought forward in the Upper House by Lord Holland. The inquiry, however, was rejected by large majorities, on both occasions. In the Commons, Mr. Tierney observed, that the capitulation seemed to him to fix an indelible stain on the national character, and to inflict a deep wound on the soldier's honour. The observations before made on that convention will sufficiently prove my concurrence in the former part of this opinion; but I cannot consider the honour of the soldier as at all implicated in a transaction, not preceded by the defeat of the troops, and originating solely in the commander.

An act for renewing the act, enabling his Majesty to detain persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, was passed on the 25th of February, after the usual opposition; and it soon received the royal sanction. A bill was



also passed in the course of the session, in consequence of the scarcity of corn, to prevent the sale of new bread. The object of this law was to diminish the consumption of bread; it being conceived, that a man could not eat so much of stale bread as he could of new. It gave rise to a great number of convictions in the metropolis, the bakers persisting, in violation of the law, in the sale of new bread.

The attention of Parliament was called to a measure of a very different kind, by Sir Henry Mildmay, on whose motion the House of Commons, on the twenty-second of May, resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of an act made in the thirty-first year of his present Majesty, intituled, "An act to relieve, upon conditions, and under restrictions, the persons therein described, from certain penalties and disabilities, to which Papists, or persons professing the Popish Religion, were by law subject."

The reason assigned by Sir H. Mildmay, for this proceeding, was the alleged increase of popery, owing to the conduct of certain religious societies, which had fled from the revolutionary persecutions in France, and had found a refuge in this country. The members of these monastic institutions, not content with the asylum thus afforded them, and with the



permission to exercise their religious rites with perfect freedom, had offended against the laws of the country by admitting young Englishwomen to take the veil, and to devote themselves to a monastic life. Sir Henry paid a tribute of justice to the peaceable demeanour, and to the most unassuming and unobtrusive gratitude, of the French emigrant priests. But he declared his opinion—an opinion in which every honest and conscientious Protestant must concur—that while it was highly proper to extend the fullest toleration to monastic societies, of both sexes, already formed, it would be highly imprudent to suffer the vacancies, which might occur, to be filled up by subjects of this country;—and that the greatest care should be taken carefully to guard against the admission of any new members, whose first obligation, on entering into such societies, was subversive of those laws and liberties, which the wisdom of our ancestors long since introduced amongst us. It fell within the observation of Sir Henry himself to know, that, in each of the two monastic societies established at Winchester, several persons had been suffered to take both veils since their residence in that city; and, as he was credibly informed, a great variety of similar instances might be produced, from different parts of the country, where these monastic institutions had been permitted to establish themselves.



These practices, he thought, should be nipped in the bud, else we might live to lament that the national humanity had been abused, and that Parliament, by voting money for their subsistence, had, in some degree, been made a party to the revival of what seemed to them the most unnatural part of the Romish faith, when it might be too late to extirpate the evils which the influence of such a system might have been introduced into the country. Another subject, to which he called the attention of the House, was the recent foundation of a great variety of Catholic schools, many of which were engrafted on, and were under the immediate superintendence and influence of, these monastic establishments. This fact had given considerable alarm and uneasiness to those reverend persons whose high situations in the regular church had placed the interests of the Protestant communion particularly in their hands. The resolution which he proposed was similar to a regulation which he understood to have been adopted in 1763, when the Catholic province of Canada was ceded to England, namely, to place within the protection of the law those convents which actually existed, but not to suffer, on any pretence whatever, the admission of any new members into such societies. In submitting this subject to Parliament,



he had complied with the general voice of the public, laity as well as clergy. When he added, to the considerations already stated, the temptation, he might say the bribe, which was held out to the public, by offering to educate children, in these Catholic seminaries, free from any expence to their parents, he thought he was not calling upon the House for any unreasonable interference, when he suggested the expediency of revising and re-considering the present laws, and of adding such strength to the arm of the executive power as might be necessary to meet the existing emergency. He then moved the following resolutions.

“ That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the temporary residence in this kingdom, of certain monastic societies, should be permitted, subject to the provisions of an act passed in the thirty-third year of his present Majesty, intituled, “ an act for establishing regulations respecting aliens arriving in this kingdom, or resident therein, in certain cases ;” and that the admission of any new members into such societies should be prohibited, and that the names and numbers of persons belonging thereto should be annually returned to the Court of Quarter-Sessions, in which they reside.



“ That all persons, undertaking the public education of youth in the Romish faith, should also return annually to the court a list, containing the names and number of their pupils, together with the names and places of abode of their respective parents; and that a power be given to magistrates, appointed by the Quarter-Sessions, to inspect such institutions at pleasure.”

The resolutions were supported by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Bragge, Mr. Newbolt, and Mr. Johnes; and were opposed by Mr. Hobhouse and Dr. Lawrence. The former observed, that the provisions of the *alien-act* were sufficient to provide a remedy for the evil complained of; but he was properly reminded, that that act could have no reference to the conduct of British subjects. On the twenty-third of June, a bill, founded on the resolution, was introduced into the House of Commons, when it produced a warm debate, supported, on the one side, by Messrs. Windham and Sheridan, and, on the other, by Sir Henry Mildmay, Sir William Scott, Mr. Dudley Ryder, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Perceval. Mr. Windham ridiculed the idea of existing danger from the Catholic religion, at a time when it had been proscribed in France, and persecuted in most of the Continental States;—he considered the cry of “the church is in danger” as an old



and obsolete clamour, having no meaning, and portending no evil. A little opposition he regarded as a salutary thing, and as calculated to stimulate the Ministers of the Established Church to a more rigid performance of their duty. If any one, indeed, attempted to preach up the rights of man, and, insubordination to lawful authority, to silence such doctrines would be a work of necessity; but popery had nothing in it of that dangerous tendency, and might be met fairly in the field of argument.

These were the sentiments of all the friends and immediate followers of the late Mr. Burke, who, most acutely alive to all the dangers of jacobinism, could descry danger in nothing else. And, because the Catholic priests in France, and the Pope himself, had been persecuted, oppressed, and exiled, by the Jacobins, they conceived that the Romish religion had lost all its terrors, and had, as it were, suffered a political purification, which rendered it perfectly harmless. Engrossed by the contemplation of this one terror, they had lost sight of the cause of those dangers which threatened the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of this country with dissolution, at the close of the seventeenth century, and which had given birth to that revolution which placed the House of Brunswick on the Throne. And, considering the



question, as if there had been no alternative between Popery and Infidelity, they incessantly espoused the former as the only barrier against the latter. As this self-deception originated in a most laudable and honourable principle, it is impossible to speak of it with severity; but as it may lead to consequences highly perilous to a Protestant community, and, as it had already led to great political errors and evils in Ireland, it becomes necessary to mark it with sufficient force to render its nature clearly intelligible, and to put the nation on its guard against its dangerous tendency. It affords matter for surprize, that one very strong fact connected with this subject should have wholly escaped the observation of these strenuous anti-jacobins; namely, that all the jacobins, in this country, and more especially in Ireland, were the loudest advocates in favour of the Catholics, and of the Catholic religion; and that jacobinical principles were most openly professed by those who took a leading part in the discussions, both in Parliament and elsewhere, and who supported all the resolutions and measures proposed for admitting the Papists to a full participation of political power. Surely the obvious deduction from these facts is, that Popery could form as close an alliance with jacobinism, as it could with arbitrary power.



It is not less remarkable that, on the present occasion, none of those noisy patriots, who, at their tavern orgies, were perpetually declaiming in favour of the principles of the Revolution of 1688, which were essentially Anti-Popish, did not take the smallest part in the debate, with the exception of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Erskine, the former of whom opposed, while the latter supported, the bill.

Other objections stated by Mr. Windham were more solid. He observed, that where no danger existed, no precaution was necessary; where there was no disease, no remedy was required. He complained of the readiness displayed by persons in calling for the interference of the House, which he considered as one of the evils of the times. The Courts below kept up their price. There were found no frivolous applications; the experiment was too costly. Parliament only was cheap. The legislature was as accessible as the Parish pump; it might be worked by the first man who put his hand to it. This alone appeared to him a sufficient reason for putting a stop to the farther progress of a bill so nugatory and useless.

The bill, however, passed the House of Commons, after it had undergone various modifications, and after the insertion of one most objectionable clause, which was used as a strong



argument against it in the Upper House. This clause went to empower the King, at his discretion, to license the admission of *any* person into a monastic or religious house, during the war. When the bill was carried to the Lords, it was strongly opposed by the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, who, after contending for the perfect adequacy of the existing laws to the removal of the evil complained of, represented the bill as unconstitutional and dangerous, on account of the alarming power which it would place in the hands of the King. It enabled the King, (by the clause before noticed) to license the performance and observance of the rites and ordinances of monastic institutions, any law, or statute, to the contrary notwithstanding. Now penance was a rite of the Romish church. Would his Majesty expose any of his subjects to corporal punishment?—Would the Lords allow the Pope's bulls to come again into England, and give the King a suspending power? The Bishop had no objection to that clause of the bill which required Catholic schoolmasters to make an annual return of their pupils; he thought such a regulation ought to be extended to all schools, particularly to those of Protestant dissenters, where the doctrines of jacobinism, sedition, and infidelity, were but too frequently inculcated to



his certain knowledge. He was a sincere friend to the toleration of all Christians, of whatever sects. By CHRISTIANS he meant those who acted up to the thirty-nine Articles, the Confession of the Saxon churches, and those who conformed to the ancient discipline of the Protestant church, as settled at the Reformation;—not those who wanted to reform, to pull down the hierarchy, and appropriate to other uses the patrimony of the Church, *who denied the divinity of our Saviour,\** and wanted to get rid of the Athanasian Creed. In all such questions as the present, the grand consideration should be, *ne quid detrimenti Ecclesia Anglicana capiat.*

\* It is important here to remark, that the Bishop, most evidently, did not consider as *Christians* those *who denied the divinity of our Saviour*. The Unitarians expressly deny that divinity, yet do not scruple to associate for the promotion of what *they* call *Christian* knowledge!! The fact is, that none can be deemed Christians who do not believe in Christ, in the doctrines which he taught, and in the account which he gave of himself, and of his mission. It has always appeared to me to be a most extraordinary perversion of human intellect, in persons who consider the Redeemer of mankind, as the promulgator of a perfect system of ethics, yet disbelieve the account which he himself gave of his divine nature; for, if there were real ground for their *disbelief*, as they, of course, suppose there is, Jesus Christ would be an impostor, of the worst description, and, therefore, could not be entitled to respect, as the founder of a moral code.



There was great danger to be apprehended from what were called Charity and Sunday Schools, in, and about, the Metropolis. His Lordship concluded by moving to postpone the bill for three months. After some observations, in support of the bill, from the Bishop of Winchester, and others, in opposition to it, by the Chancellor, Loughborough, the Bishop of Rochester's motion was carried, and the bill consequently lost.

In the course of the Session Lord Auckland had brought forward, in the House of Peers, a subject of the greatest importance to the morals of the people, and, consequently, to the welfare of the State; the great prevalence of adultery, as exemplified in the multiplied applications for bills of divorce. The measure by which it was proposed to check the alarming increase of this evil was, by preventing the inter-marriage of the adulterous parties after the bond of matrimony, in the first instance, had been dissolved by a Legislative Act. A similar bill had been introduced thirty years before, by the Duke of Athol, when it passed the Lords *unanimously*, but was negatived by the Commons; and a similar attempt, by the Bishop of Durham, in 1779, experienced a similar fate. Hitherto, then, the Lords had *unanimously* acknowledged the necessity of a mea-



sure which the Commons refused to adopt.— In the present instance, however, that unanimity did not appear. The bill was strongly and vehemently opposed, on a sound *pretext*, indeed, but by most wretched arguments. It was pretended that the proposed prohibition to marry would *increase* the sin of adultery! It would also shut out all possibility, on the part of the adultress, to return to *virtue*; and reduce her, in a manner, to the necessity of leading a life of prostitution. By those who used these arguments, not more destructive of all moral principle, than repugnant to right reason and common sense, it seems to have been conceived that *virtue*, in such cases, consisted in the continued enjoyment of the fruits of sin; in the constant possession of that sensual reward, which had led the adultress to violate her marriage vow, to break through every maternal and conjugal tie, and to disobey a positive command of God. And, farther, that there was no alternative between such a connection and a life of prostitution. It never occurred to these *Men of the World*, that retirement, penitence, and prayer, were best adapted to restore a lost woman to peace of mind, and to the consolations of hope; to enable her to make the best reparation in her power for the past, and to open to her the



most encouraging prospect for the future.—These vain Legislators never considered the controuling influence of example on female morals; the pernicious effect, on society, of holding up to the contemplation of the rising generation, a triumphant adultress, revelling in all the luxury of guilt, and obtaining not merely *pardon*, (which it is not for a Christian to withhold) but *protection, countenance, and support*, from a *liberal* world, without the observance of that indispensable condition prescribed by a Divine lawgiver,—*Repentance*; and for no other reason than that she had succeeded in making the partner of her sin, her partner for life!

The Duke of Clarence took an active part in opposition to the bill, and, in the course of a long speech, made an observation which it would ill-become the historian of the times to pass over without an appropriate comment.—He stated the Royal marriage act to be an act “in consequence of which *he could not marry*; it, indeed, placed *him* in the same situation in which the present bill would generally *place those who should unfortunately fall under its provisions*.”\* Now the whole scope of the argu-

\* *Substance of the Speeches of his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, in the House of Lords, April 5, May 16, 21, and 23, 1800, against the Divorce Bill.*



ment detailed in the printed speech, whence this passage is extracted, goes to establish the point, —that if the bill passed into a law, its inevitable effect would be to reduce divorced adulteresses to the necessity of leading a life of prostitution; even a “*perpetual prostitution*,” was expressly stated to be the consequence of the bill. But I shall adopt the reflections of a contemporary writer on this remark, which are in perfect unison with my own.—“ The analogy contended for, then, is, that the act alluded to absolutely prevents the marriage of the male members of the Royal Family, and reduces them to the necessity of living in a state of perpetual fornication. If such were really the effect of the act, it must meet with the unqualified reprobation of every good Christian, and ought instantly to be expunged from the Statute book. But the act of the 12th Geo. III. has no such sin to answer for. It only prohibits the marriage of the Royal Family without the previous consent of the King; nor is the prohibition even absolute, for where any one of the Royal Family, of the age of twenty-five, has given twelve months notice to the Privy Council of his intention to marry, he is at liberty to marry, unless, in the interval, both Houses of Parliament have expressly declared their disapprobation of the proposed



connection. The fact, therefore, was misrepresented, and seems to have been intended only to supply an excuse for any of those illustrious personages, if any such there should ever unfortunately be, who, forgetting what they owed to their God, their country, and themselves, should be induced to lead a profligate and immoral life. But no such excuse can be found. If personages, so circumstanced, should ever feel the hardship of being unable to contract such marriages as their inclination might lead them to form; they should consider, first, the principle of the prohibition, the sacrifice of individual convenience to general good, deducing the wisdom and necessity of it from those melancholy pages of our history which exhibit the destructive consequences of the civil contentions which divided the rival Houses of York and Lancaster, and deluged the kingdom with blood; and, secondly, that from the situation which imposes such hardships adequate advantages arise; the comforts of affluence without exertion of body or mind; rank, and dignity, without any previous effort to obtain them, and exclusive privileges without the necessity of personal qualifications; and, thirdly, they should recollect, that no human law whatever can afford an excuse for the violation of a divine precept."



The very weak, and most objectionable arguments urged, in opposition to this salutary measure, were most ably confuted by Lords Auckland, Eldon, Hobart, and Grenville; and by the Bishops of London, Rochester, and Durham. And the bill, at length, passed the Upper House by a small majority. In the Lower House it was supported by Mr. Pitt, who considered its provisions as calculated, upon the whole, to produce a beneficial effect on society; but it was thrown out, on the report, by a majority of thirty-nine. Thus the Commons, for the third time, defeated the virtuous efforts of the Lords, and left a crime, which strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, scatters discord and misery over the social system, and shakes to the centre the whole fabric of civil society, to the sole correction of laws which experience had proved to be wholly inadequate to its suppression, or even to its prevention. The Parliament was prorogued on the twenty-ninth of July.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

Military operations on the Continent---Genoa surrenders to the Austrians---Buonaparté enters Italy---Drives the Austrians from Milan and Pavia---Unaccountable inactivity of the Austrian Commander, General Melas---Battle of Marengo---The French defeated on every side---Battle restored by a masterly manœuvre of General Desaix---Victory finally declares for the French---Impatience of the Austrian troops to attack the French the next morning---Disgraceful Convention concluded by Melas---Moreau enters Germany and overruns Saxony---An Armistice---Renewal of military operations in Germany---The Battle of Hohenlinden---Peace concluded at Luneville---By this treaty the French realize the projects of Brissot and Robespierre by extending their boundary to the Rhine---Affairs of Egypt---Treaty of El Arish---Kleber assassinated---He is succeeded in the command of the Army by Menou---State of Public Affairs at the close of the eighteenth century---View of Mr. Pitt's policy---Considerations on the probable state of the country had a different system of policy been pursued---The argument illustrated by a reference to the actual state of those powers who had procured peace with France---The origin of the war, its progress, and its partial failure, considered in relation to Mr. Pitt's conduct---Effect of the war upon England beneficial on the whole---Scarcity of Corn---



Reflections on its causes---War proved not to increase the  
 price of Corn---Popular commotions in the Capital---  
 Parliament convened---The King's Speech---Legislative  
 measures adopted for averting the effects of the scarcity---  
 Wise principles of political economy entertained by Mr.  
 Pitt---Mr. Tierney moves an inquiry into the State of the  
 Nation---Motion rejected by one hundred and fifty-seven  
 to thirty-seven---Principles avowed by the Northern  
 powers---Incompatible with the maritime greatness and  
 commercial interests of Great Britain---Contrary to the  
 established Law of Nations---Meeting of the *Imperial*  
 Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
 Ireland---New title assumed by the King---Reflections on  
 the abandonment of the old title of *King of France*---  
 Mr. Addington again elected Speaker of the House of  
 Commons---Difference between the King and his Minis-  
 ters on the Catholic Question---Mr. Pitt's former decla-  
 rations on this subject referred to---Remarks on the  
*conditions* which Mr. Pitt had declared to be necessary  
 for the adoption of the proposed measure---These condi-  
 tions shewn not to exist---No pledge given by Mr. Pitt to  
 the Irish Papists to bring forward the Question of giving  
 them further indulgences---Mr. Dundas commissioned to  
 open the matter to the King---Result of the conference---  
 Examination of the arguments in favour of the Question  
 ---The Coronation Oath---The King complete master of  
 the subject---Refuses to yield his conscience to the force  
 of metaphysical subtleties---His Majesty resolutely rejects  
 the proposal of his Ministers---Mr. Pitt a sincere friend to  
 the Established Church---Remarks on the new Test, which  
 he meant to introduce as a substitute for the existing Test---  
 Its efficacy denied---Mr. Pitt deceived as to the Catholic  
 Question---Inefficacy of the proposed measure maintained---  
 That measure at variance with the general principle of Mr.  
 Pitt's policy---Probable cause of his conduct on this occasion



---Reflections on the imputed change in the principles of modern Papists---Existence of such charge disproved by the pastoral letter of Dr. Troy---The fourth Council of Lateran imposes obligations on a Papist incompatible with his duty to a Protestant Government---The Papists of Ireland should have been called upon to renounce the principles contained in the decrees of that Council---Distinction drawn between *toleration* and *encouragement*---Mr. Pitt and his principal colleagues tender their resignations to the King; but offer to remain in place till a new Ministry is formed---The Imperial Parliament opened by the King---Speech from the Throne---Debate on the Address in the House of Commons---Speech of Mr. Grey---His sentiments incompatible with the principles of the Old Whigs---Ministers defended by Mr. Pitt---Address carried---Lord Grenville, in the House of Peers, avows the Catholic Question to be the cause of the change of the Ministry---Mr. Pitt opens the Budget---Takes a view of the prosperous state of the Country---New Ministry---Mr. Addington, Premier---Mr. Pitt and his friends promise to support the new Ministers---General character of the new Administration---Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas explain their conduct in the House of Commons---Papers circulated among the Papists of Ireland by Lord Cornwallis---Animadversions on these papers---General remarks on the conduct of Mr. Pitt.

[1800.] After the unexpected discomfiture of the Russian army at the close of the last campaign, and the consequent triumph of the French arms in Switzerland, by which one main part of the plan of that campaign had been defeated, a total change took place in the com-



mand and disposition of the allied forces. The wayward disposition of the Russian Emperor, Paul, little inclined to listen to a calm investigation of facts, and easily led away by the hasty impulses of passion, had conceived an insuperable disgust at the unexpected disasters which had befallen his troops, in Switzerland and in Holland; and he, in consequence, recalled his whole army from the scene of action, and, instead of loading the conqueror of Italy with additional honours, he heaped insults on that venerable head which bowed beneath the weight of well-earned laurels, and left Suworow dejected and forlorn, to die of a broken-heart, the sad victim of injustice and ingratitude. The Archduke Charles, too, who gave fair promise of emulating the example of that renowned warrior, had, by the crooked policy, and ruinous influence, of the Aulic Council, which had controuled all his operations, and thwarted all his views, been deprived of the command of the Austrian troops. The Austrians, in Germany, were now led by the veteran, General Kray; while Melas continued to command the imperial force employed in Italy. The first operation of any consequence, on the side of Italy, was the siege of Genoa, by the Austrians, who were assisted by an English squadron, under the command of Lord Keith. Massena defended the



city. After a series of actions, in which many thousand lives were lost on both sides ; Genoa surrendered to the Austrians on the fourth of June.

Meantime, Buonaparté collected a powerful army of reserve, in the plains of Burgundy, of which he took the command, about the middle of May. Having effected the passage of the Alps with little opposition, he entered the plains of Lombardy ; and advancing, with rapidity, compelled the Austrians to evacuate Milan and Pavia. Crossing the Po, he attacked a body of Austrians at Montebello, and forced them to retire. Melas, whose inactivity was unaccountable, had neglected to oppose any adequate resistance to the inroads of the enemy, and was so badly informed of his movements, that he thought Buonaparté was at Dijon at the time when he was in Lombardy. Being, at last, however, awakened from his lethargy, he marched to encounter the victorious army. On the 16th of June, a general action took place, near the village of Marengo, which, during nine hours, raged with great fury. About four in the afternoon, the Austrians had completely driven in every division of the French, and were on the point of obtaining a complete victory. At this critical period, the French General, Desaix, who had been taken prisoner on his return from Egypt,



and imprudently liberated in time to be present at this action, proposed to Buonaparté to point some pieces of artillery against a particular part of the Austrian column, which, in the pursuit, had been injudiciously weakened; and if he made the impression which he expected, he intended to improve the advantage by bringing up the reserve, under his own command. Buonaparté was, at this time, so confused at his discomfiture, and so enraged, that he had lost all presence of mind, and was incapable of giving any distinct orders. Desaix, then, was left to follow the dictates of his own judgment; he executed the proposed manœuvre; it was productive of the expected effect; he led on his division with great gallantry and resolution, and turned the tide of victory in favour of the French. He fell, however, in the attempt. The battle lasted till the close of the day, when the French remained masters of the field. To the capture of the Austrian General, Zach, as he was hastening to give the necessary orders for repairing the confusion occasioned by the attack of Desaix, may the disastrous issue of this battle be principally ascribed. Still the loss of the French was more considerable than that of the Austrians;—the former was stated, by accounts most to be relied on, to be from 12 to 14,000 men; while that of the latter did not



exceed 9,000. The Austrian soldiers were so enraged at having victory thus wrested from their hands, that they were loud in their calls upon their commander, the next morning, to renew the contest. Instead of obeying this patriotic call, Melas concluded an armistice, and afterwards a convention, by which he consented to restore to the French all the fortresses which Suworow had taken from them in the preceding campaign; thus abandoning, almost without a struggle, all the fruits of that warrior's victories!\*

During these transactions in Italy, the French army, under Moreau, had entered Suabia, at the latter end of April, where it was opposed by General Kray. After various movements of little importance, they, at length, compelled the Austrians to retire, and, entering

\* I must, once more, express my surprize at the conduct of English writers, in adopting all the false accounts of the French Generals as true, even without stating them to be of French origin. The French, at the battle of Marengo, were superior in number to the Austrians, yet, in two works before noticed, the Annual Register for 1800, and Dr. Bisset's History of the present reign, the superiority of numbers is assigned to the Austrians, and the most extravagant and unfounded praises are lavished on Buonaparté, to whom the whole merit of the victory (such as it was!) is ascribed, when, in fact, he had lost the battle, which was only restored by the judicious conduct of Desaix.



Bavaria, took possession of Munich, levied contributions on the Elector, and threatened the Hereditary States of the Emperor. Thus pressed, the Austrians deemed it expedient to consent to an armistice, which was concluded with Moreau, on the 14th of July. Count St. Julien was sent to Paris, by the Austrian Court, where he exceeded his powers by signing a separate treaty of peace with France, on the basis of the treaty of Campo Formio. This treaty the Emperor formally disavowed, and refused to conclude any treaty, unless England was included in it. At the beginning of September, a proposal was made, through Mr. Otto, the French Commissary, residing in London, to the British Ministers, for concluding a naval armistice, on which condition alone the First Consul would consent to prolong the armistice with Austria. A long correspondence took place on this subject, but it evidently appearing that the only object of Buonaparté was to obtain an opportunity of sending supplies to Malta and Alexandria, both of which were strictly blockaded by an English squadron; and, as a new armistice was, during the negotiation, concluded with Austria, on condition of the surrender of the three important fortresses of Philipsburgh, Ulm, and Ingoldstadt, into the hands of the French, who thus secured an



opening into the hereditary States of Austria, the proposal was ultimately rejected on the 9th of October.

This armistice terminated on the 29th of November, when Moreau resumed offensive operations. The Archduke John at first obtained a considerable advantage over the French; and he resolved to improve it by making a general attack on their lines, at Hohenlinden, on the third of December. But the elements proved more formidable to the Austrians than even the arms of the enemy. In consequence of a great snow, which fell on the morning of the attack, the central column of the army alone reached the destined point; while an opportunity was afforded to the French to send a division, between that column and the left wing, so as to fall on the rear of the column, at the very moment when it began the attack in front. Still, under this manifest disadvantage, the Austrians gallantly supported the unequal contest for several hours, and made the French pay dearly for the victory which accident and superiority of numbers had secured to them. The battle of Hohenlinden terminated the struggles of the Emperor for the recovery of those States which the enemy had wrested from him. He soon after sued for peace; and, on the ninth of February, 1801,



signed the treaty of Luneville; by which France obtained a cession of all the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine, making that river, from the place where it leaves Switzerland to that where it enters Holland, the boundary of the new Republic; thus realizing the original projects of the first revolutionists. The acquisitions of this territory destroyed one of the chief barriers against the encroachments of France in the north of Europe. But, that no doubt might be left of the determination of France to overawe the empire, by the continual fear of hostile incursions into Germany, the restitution of Dusseldorf, Ehrenbreitstein, Philipsburgh, Cassel, Kehl, and Brisac, on the right bank of the Rhine, were rendered of little value by a stipulation that they should remain in the same state in which they were at the moment of their evacuation, that is, in ruins. France, therefore, retained the power of interposition in the affairs of Germany, by the right which she had reserved to herself by this treaty, to settle the indemnities to be secured to the German Princes, who were proprietors of the territory ceded to her, on the left bank of the Rhine; and by her ability, in consequence of these cessions, to make sudden irruptions into the heart of the hereditary States of Austria. Istria, Dalmatia, and the Venetian Isles in the



Adriatic, were secured to Austria, together with Venice, the Bocca di Cattaro, the canals and the country included between the hereditary States of Austria, the Adriatic Sea, and the Adige, from the Tyrol to the mouth of that sea;—the towing-path of the Adige to form the line of limitation. France took to herself, and for her vassal, the Italian Republic, or kingdom, as it was soon destined to be, the dominions of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Modenese, whose Sovereigns were to be indemnified for the territory, thus iniquitously wrested from them, by other territories to be wrested, in a manner equally iniquitous, from the Sovereign Princes of Germany.

While France was thus employed in the execution of her ambitious plans, for humiliating her ancient rival, and for acquiring the ability to dictate laws to the continent, the naval force of Great Britain had been engaged in harassing the coasts of the enemy, blockading his ports, and intercepting his supplies. In August, an expedition was fitted out, under the command of Sir James Murray Pulteney, and Sir John Borlase Warren, whose first destination was against the Spanish port of Ferrol. After the troops were landed, however, the place was found too strong to be attacked with any prospect of success, and the attempt was



therefore relinquished. A more formidable force, both naval and military, was sent against Cadiz, under Lord Keith and Sir Ralph Abercrombie, but, as a pestilent disorder raged in the city, daily destroying numbers of the inhabitants, as it was, nevertheless, capable of making a long resistance, and, as the army had another and more important object in view, the destruction of the French in Egypt, this expedition was also abandoned. A body of troops had been previously sent, under Major-General Pigot, to Malta, which surrendered to the English, on the 15th of September. Here, and at Minorca, the greater part of the force destined for the attack upon Egypt was stationed, till the necessary preparations for that purpose were completed. In the West Indies, the Dutch settlement of Curacao was taken possession of by a British force, as was also the factory of Goree on the coast of Africa.

After Buonaparté's flight from Egypt, Kleber entered into a convention, at El Arish, with the commander of the Turkish forces, by which he agreed to evacuate that country, and to return, with his troops, to Europe.— And this convention having been referred to Sir Sidney Smith, by the Turks, it received his sanction; it was signed on the 24th of January, 1801. As soon, however, as the British Cabinet



were apprized of the fact, without being informed that Sir Sidney Smith had any share in the transaction; they wisely considered that it would be highly impolitic and improper, to suffer such a French force to arrive in Europe, to reinforce the armies acting against their ally, in Italy or Germany; and, accordingly, sent instructions to Lord Keith, the commander of the British fleet, in the Mediterranean, to prevent the execution of it, by capturing the troops, [on their departure from Alexandria. These instructions were communicated to Kleber by the Admiral, when that General apprized the Turks, that there was an end to the convention; after which hostilities were renewed, and some advantages were gained by the French.

The moment, however, the Ministers received certain information, that the treaty of El Arish had received the sanction of a British officer, although he was wholly unauthorized to act in a diplomatic character, at that time, and, consequently, had no power to sign such an instrument, they rather chose to risk all the inconvenience, which might result from the presence of Kleber's army in Europe, than to subject the national character even to an unfounded imputation of a breach of faith, and sent counter-instructions to Lord Keith, autho-



rizing him to fulfil the terms of the treaty, and to suffer the French to pass unmolested. While a negotiation was opened with Kleber, pursuant to these instructions, that General was assassinated at Cairo, by a Turkish emissary, (on the 14th of January, 1801,) when the command of the French army devolved on Menou, who had publicly professed the Mahometan faith, and added to his own name that of Abdallah.

The close of the eighteenth century was marked by circumstances of a gloomy and a discouraging nature to England. All her plans for humbling the pride, curbing the ambition, and curtailing the power, of her implacable enemy, had completely failed; France had reduced the Continent of Europe to that situation which enabled her, almost without the fear of opposition, to parcel out its various states at her pleasure, for the purpose either of dispossessing those who viewed her with a jealous eye, or of rewarding others who were obsequious to her will. A very large portion of the territory included between the Texel and the Bay of Naples, was occupied by her tributaries and vassals, or by princes who trembled at her frown, and held their tottering power by the frail tenure of her ruler's will. Prussia, indeed, and Russia, had not yet bent beneath



the weight of her arms, nor sunk before the machinations of her intriguing spirit. But the Emperor Paul, forsaking his alliance with England, had become her enemy, and the Prussian Monarch, who had, for some time, held the scale of victory in his hands, and might have made it preponderate against France, had he so chosen, with a contempt of all regard for the security of his own Throne, and with a degree of folly scarcely to be conceived, indulged his ancient jealousy of the House of Austria, contemplated her humiliation with pleasure, passively looked on while France was trampling, with ferocious disdain, on all the settled institutions of surrounding states, vainly imagining, that he possessed the ability to stop her wild career, whenever her efforts should be directed against himself, and, more effectually to favour her views, joined a hostile confederacy of the Northern powers, which, at the instigation of Paul, had been recently formed against England.

But this state of things, though confidently asserted, by the Opponents of Mr. Pitt, to be the natural result of his improvident measures, could not fairly be imputed to any disasters which it was in the power of the British Minister to prevent; nor to any chain of circumstances over which he had any controul. Had



the sentiments of the Opposition been suffered to influence the conduct of the Cabinet, at the beginning of the year 1793, is it to be credited, that France would have remained quiet within her own boundaries, and have imposed a curb on that insatiate spirit of revolution and conquest, which she had openly renounced, but invariably displayed?—Had the insidious explanations of Chauvelin, and his new masters, been admitted as satisfactory by Mr. Pitt, though demonstrated to be delusive and false, by the Members of the Executive Council of France themselves; would such admission have prevented the completion of a plan long formed for the invasion of Holland, (a plan which constituted an essential part of the revolutionary system,) by the army of Dumouriez? Fortunately for the cause of truth, and for the satisfaction of posterity, the most incontrovertible documents have been supplied, by the French themselves, to prove, beyond the possibility of cavil, that, let the conduct of England have been what it would, they would have pursued, without scruple, their ambitious course, and have employed their arms, and their principles, for the subversion and ruin of the neighbouring powers. War, they declared to be necessary for the destruction of their own monarchy, and for the establishment of their Republic. It could



not, then, have been avoided by us, without an absolute departure from the sage policy of our ancestors, from the system invariably pursued by our greatest Statesmen, and our wisest Monarchs; and without submitting to the degradation of abandoning, to the mercy of France, those allies, whom we were bound, equally by interest and by treaty, to protect against her attacks. We might, indeed, by a sacrifice of national character, and by a total disregard of the best interests of the country, have folded our arms, and looked patiently and passively on, like the King of Prussia, while France was extending her Empire from the North to the South of Europe; from the Zuyder-zee to the Adriatic; while she subdued her allies, annexed the territories of surrounding powers to her own; and left us without a friend on the Continent. But, by thus basely descending from the high station which we had hitherto held in the scale of European powers, would the interests of the nation have been promoted;—would her commerce have been increased;—would her strength have been augmented?—No, the commerce of France would have superseded the commerce of England; France would have monopolized the Trade of Europe; her fleets would have dictated laws to all the maritime powers; and her prohibitory decrees would have



deprived us of all the Continental markets.— Emboldened by our cowardice, presuming on our inactivity, she would have adopted every measure for counteracting our influence in the affairs of Europe, and, in exact proportion as her means of annoyance would have been extended, by the uninterrupted exercise of her revolutionary power, would our means of offence and defence have been contracted. Nor is it to be supposed that our acquiescence would have appeased her enmity. If we cast our eyes on the fate of those powers, who not only observed the strictest neutrality, but who rendered her the most signal services, at the time of her greatest need, we shall see, that the reward of their *prudence*, their *courtesy*, their *forbearance*, and their *friendship*, was the subversion of their governments, the plunder of their property, and the destruction of their liberties. And, on what ground could England, the constant rival, and frequent enemy, of France, the only state which had ever imposed effective restraints on her ambition, who had often checked the progress of her arms, who had constantly defeated her fleets, and who was her successful competitor for pre-eminence in political and commercial consequence; England, in short, who was at once envied, hated, and dreaded by France; on what ground could she expect



to experience from the conquerors of Europe, and the tyrants of the Continent, more indulgent treatment, and a better fate, than Switzerland, Tuscany, Venice, Prussia, or Spain?

Had England been able, with diminished resources, and humbled spirit,—for humbled must the spirit of Englishmen have been, at remaining passive spectators of the ruin of Europe, at contemplating the triumph of her natural enemy;—still to defend herself against the undivided forces of France, strengthened, as they would have been, by the united navies of all the maritime powers of the Continent, she would, at least, have had to sustain a conflict more terrible, and more ruinous, than the lengthened war, which the support of her national character, a sense of national security, and a regard for the obligation of treaties, induced her to wage. Sunk, and lost, in the estimation of Europe, the very source of national honour destroyed, with crippled commerce, and curtailed resources, had she fallen in such a struggle, she would have fallen unlamented and despised; and, even had she ultimately succeeded, in the unequal struggle, so far as to preserve her territory entire, she would have only survived the wrecks, to become the contempt, of Europe.

In this view of the subject, the danger,



arising from the *principles* of the French Republic, has been kept entirely out of sight, from a conviction that the conclusion which has been drawn is sufficiently solid without such a support. But, independently of the facts which have been stated, and of the arguments which have been used, it is contended that, if the war had not taken place, the free intercourse which would have continued between the two countries would have afforded such an opportunity to the French Jacobins to diffuse their abominable tenets in this kingdom, that a rebellion would, in all human probability, have ensued. Indeed, considering the various attempts to excite a spirit of disaffection in the country, and to stimulate the people to take up arms against the government, which, without this intercourse, were actually made, there can be very little reason to doubt, that, had the intercourse subsisted, an active rebellion would have taken place, and, possibly, the Constitution, that sacred treasure which Englishmen have received from their forefathers, and which they justly regard as the greatest blessing which free subjects can enjoy, might have been destroyed by the unhallowed hands of furious demagogues, actuated by a blind zeal; but trained to desolation and murder, by the sage philosophers of Republican France. If, then, the ideas here



advanced are just, on this important question, the war saved the nation from all the horrors of a revolution, or, at least, from all the miseries of a civil war; and England is indebted to it for the preservation of her matchless constitution, and of all the comforts and enjoyments of civil liberty and of social life.

It is clear, therefore, if these premises be admitted, first, that the war could not have been avoided without the loss of national character, if it could have been avoided at all;—and secondly, that, notwithstanding the burdens which it imposed, and the disappointments with which it was too frequently marked, it was, on the whole, most beneficial in its effects to England. It would only, then, remain to be considered, whether the failure to accomplish the great object of reducing the power of France, and of crushing the hydra of jacobinism on the continent, was imputable to the misconduct of the Minister. And, in order to come to a right decision, on this branch of the question, it should be first ascertained, whether it arose from causes which this country could controul, or from the conduct of other powers, who settled their own plan of operations, and followed their own system of policy. The principal causes of this failure were, the secession of the King of Prussia from the Grand



confederacy, and his subsequent neutrality;—the corruption of the Austrian officers, in the first campaign in Italy; the mistaken tactics of the Austrian Generals; and the misconduct of the Aulic Council, in controuling the operations of the Archduke Charles, and in acting in violation of the plan of proceeding, settled by the allies;—and, lastly, the caprice of the Russian Emperor, in withdrawing his troops, and in leaving Austria to fight her battles alone. Not one of these measures depended upon the will of Mr. Pitt, who exerted himself to the utmost to prevent their adoption. Whatever Great Britain could contribute to the support of the common cause, in men, money, or other implements of war, were liberally granted, promptly provided, and faithfully applied. In the sole instance, perhaps, of Holland, more might have been done, by timely exertion, and the employment of a more considerable force, than actually was done. Still, however, the Ministers were not responsible for the disgraceful termination of that expedition, which was an act not of necessity, but of choice, in the commander.

Mr. Pitt, then, had nothing to reproach himself with, respecting the gloomy aspect of public affairs at the close of the century. The prospect was rendered still more dismal, by



another occurrence, over which the Minister had no more controul, than he had over the operations and politics of the continental powers;—the scarcity of corn, the causes of which had been grossly misrepresented, had excited a considerable degree of popular discontent and clamour. A serious disposition to tumult and riot, became manifest in the metropolis, in the autumn of 1800, but although, by the indecisive conduct of the Lord Mayor, it was suffered to disgrace the country for several days, the active exertions of the magistracy, and the volunteers, finally repressed the growing spirit of outrage, and restored the capital to a state of tranquillity.

Some of the most judicious writers on political economy have been enabled to ascertain, with as much accuracy as such calculations will admit of, that the best crops of grain which are produced in the most favourable seasons will not yield more than a sufficient supply for the consumption of the country for fifteen months; and that the worst seasons seldom produce more than sufficient for six months. On the present occasion, there had been two bad crops successively; that of 1799 being almost the worst ever known; and that of 1800 being one-fourth below an average crop. It is easy to perceive, that this circumstance alone was



sufficient to account for the scarcity and dearness of corn, without having recourse to the practice of monopoly and forestalling. Not but that there was some reason to believe that the evil was, in a small degree, perhaps, aggravated by the avarice of interested speculators, who, thinking to profit by the public calamity, accumulated considerable quantities of grain, much of which was spoiled, and thrown into the river.

The best means of providing a remedy for this alarming evil, was the adoption of rigid economy in the consumption of bread, and the substitution of other nutritious food, more easily obtained. By these precautions, and by acts of charity, unexampled in extent, and in propriety of application, the worst effects of the scarcity were averted, and much of the distress, arising from the dearness of provisions, alleviated if not removed. But, it was a mortifying circumstance to observe the apathy, and, in some instances, the discontent, with which the bounty exercised towards the poorer classes of society was received. It was, indeed, rather claimed as a right than accepted as a favour; and the strange and preposterous notion was entertained, that, in a season of public calamity, occasioned by the visitations of Providence, the poor are to be exempted from all the



inconveniences to which the rest of the community are subjected.

It has been already observed, that some violent partisans, both in Parliament and elsewhere, ascribed the dearness, occasioned by the scarcity, to the *war*, and inferred that the only effective remedy was *peace*. Now, so little solid foundation for this inference was there, that a very acute writer on political economy has demonstrated, by a table of the prices of corn, from the year 1688 to the end of the year 1792, that the average price of wheat, in all the years of war, during that period, was 2*l.* 2*s.* 11*d.* per quarter, and the average price, in all the years of peace, 2*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.* per quarter. So that, upon an average of one hundred and five years, the price of wheat, in times of war, was less than in times of peace, and that at a rate of 5*l.* 8*s.* 8½*d.* per cent. And the result of a very elaborate investigation of the subject was, that “*the effect of war is to reduce the price of wheat; and, it is probable, that of all the prime necessities of life, which are not directly taxed.*”\*

\* *A determination of the average depression of the price of wheat in war, below that of the preceding peace; and of its re-advance in the following; according to its yearly rates, from the revolution to the end of the last peace; with remarks on their greater variations in that entire period.* By J. Brand, C. L. M. A. &c. &c. 1800. In this able tract, written for the lau-



But the effect produced by the wide diffusion of false notions on this interesting subject, by a jacobin faction, who sought to convert the distresses with which it had pleased Providence to afflict the country, into the means for its destruction, and who had endeavoured, and in some instances successfully, to stimulate the lower orders, by a sense of their sufferings, to riot, insurrection, and rebellion, rendered it necessary to convene the Parliament sooner

for the noble purpose of exposing the falsehoods of those who, from factious motives, had laboured to persuade the people that all the distress which they experienced from the extraordinary rise in the price of provisions was, exclusively, imputable to the war, "The circumstances of these times," says the judicious author—"in which we are attacked by foreign war, and by sedition at home, render this an error pregnant with the worst of dangers; the populace will yield a ready ear to the demagogue or agitator who is able to persuade them, that he is possessed of a cure for any sufferings they may labour under; and this kingdom never contained in it such an army of enemies of this description. The calamities of adverse seasons, they persuade the uninformed class to be the guilt of their governors, and that they themselves are their only true protectors, the only persons attentive to their interests, which can be secured solely by embracing their measures. The ruin which the diffusion of such a belief may bring upon us needs not to be enlarged on: in this state of suffering of the poor, the seeds of commotion are widely sown; and the eruption of a single riot may be the commencement of a formidable insurrection; and that the signal of more."



than was intended, for the express purpose of taking this matter into serious consideration, with a view, as well to the adoption of the best remedies of which the case would admit, as to the conveyance of a right understanding of the causes of the existing evil. Parliament, accordingly, met, on the 11th of November, when the King, in his speech from the Throne, immediately called their attention to the object which most interested his feelings, and most affected the community; he earnestly conjured them to adopt all such measures, as might, upon full consideration, appear best calculated to alleviate the severe pressure now experienced, and to prevent the danger of its recurrence by promoting, as far as possible, the permanent extension and improvement of agriculture. The general remedies more particularly recommended were economy in consumption and encouragement of importation. Alluding to the complaint which had been publicly made of unfair practices in trade for increasing the price of provisions, his Majesty censured, on the one hand, all such practices should they be found to exist, and deprecated, on the other, the adoption of hasty prejudices, to which, it was possible, the complaints in question might be referred. "If it should appear," he said, "that the evil necessarily arising from unfavourable seasons



has been increased by any undue combinations, or fraudulent practices, for the sake of adding unfairly to the price, you will feel an earnest desire of effectually preventing such abuses; but you will, I am sure, be careful to distinguish any practices of this nature from that regular and long-established course of trade, which experience has shewn to be indispensable, in the present state of society, for the supply of the markets, and for the subsistence of my people." The King justly censured the disturbances which had occurred in various parts of the kingdom, which he truly described as resulting from the acts of malicious and disaffected persons, and as calculated to increase the evil which they professed to remedy; and he paid a just tribute of praise to the conduct of the volunteers, whose active efforts had contributed much to the repression of these outrages.

Mr. Pitt, in supporting the address, in the Commons, which went merely to thank the King for his communication, and to pledge the House to take the subject recommended to their notice into immediate consideration, strongly deprecated the introduction of party politics into a question of this nature. And he displayed notions of political economy not less correct than those which he manifested on mat-



ters of legislation and government. Having proposed that the House should resolve itself into a committee, for the purpose of encouraging importation by bounties, which he conceived to be the most judicious and most effective remedy that could be adopted, and which measure had the advantage over every speculative project, by the experience which had been had of its efficacy during the two last years ; he added, " let investigation be pursued ; let remedies be suggested ; the House will hear with impartiality, and decide upon conviction. I do not hesitate, at the same time, to declare, that, to go beyond the remedy which is plain, practical, sanctioned by the soundest principles, and confirmed by the surest experience, must ever be a dangerous course : it is unsafe in the attempt, it is unworthy of a statesman in the design, to abandon the system which practice has explained, and experience has strengthened, for the visionary advantages of a crude, untried theory. It is no less unsafe, no less unworthy, of the active politician, to adhere to any theory, however just in its general principle, which excludes from its view those particular details, those unexpected situations, which must render the scheme of the philosophic politician in the closet inapplicable to the actual circumstances of human affairs. But, if it be unwise to be



guided solely by speculative systems of political economy, surely it is something worse to draw theories of regulation from clamour and alarm. If we ought not to bend observation and experience to any theory, surely we ought much less to make just principles and tried courses yield to unwise projects, struck out from temporary distress, the offspring not of argument, but of fear; not of inquiry, but of passion; not of cool reflection, but of inflamed prejudice. No man, therefore, who duly considered the causes from which the prosperity of the country had arisen, who well understood the foundation on which it stood, could think, for a moment, that, to redress any supposed mischief, which, in times of peculiar scarcity and distress, monopoly might be supposed to have occasioned, it would be right to strike at the freedom of trade, and the application of industry and capital; to do so would be to bring us back to something worse than the system that prevailed five hundred years ago; inasmuch as the state of the country, the distribution of property, and the employment of industry, were so infinitely different from that obtained at that period. Indeed, nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that such a scheme, even though suited to the æra from which it is derived, could be



applicable to the new interests and demands of another state of society.

It was by this wise policy of rendering general principles subservient to practical benefits, by not wantonly departing from them, on the one hand, and by not pertinaciously adhering to them, on the other, according as the prosperity of the nation, and the good of the community, would be best promoted, that the public conduct of Mr. Pitt was invariably regulated. In that he was not a speculative, but a practical, politician. He made the sum of general good to be obtained by any measure the criterion by which he was guided in its adoption or rejection. He regarded theory as useful only in the direction of practice. He framed no speculative code to be consulted upon every emergency, but adapted his acts to the circumstances which immediately called for them.

It is needless to repeat his arguments on the imputed effect of the war, in producing the existing scarcity, or the rise in the price of provisions, after what has been stated on that subject. It will suffice to state one plain decisive fact: in the years 1794 and 1795 the price of corn was very high, whereas, at a later period of the war, when, of course, any effect which it might produce on the price of corn would be increased, that is, from Michael-



mas, 1796, to Midsummer, 1799, the price sunk below that which, in the present state of things, could afford a fair profit to the farmer, the average not exceeding 48s. 6d. per quarter.

The House formed itself into a general Committee, as proposed by Mr. Pitt, and adopted the following resolutions and bounties: That the average price of foreign corn in London should be published weekly in the Gazette, that on every quarter of imported wheat, weighing 424 pounds, a bounty should be given equal to the sum, by which the average price published in the Gazette, in the third week after its importation should be less than five pounds per quarter. On every quarter of barley, weighing 352 pounds, a bounty rendering its price equal to fifty shillings. On every quarter of rye, weighing 408 pounds, a bounty rendering its price equal to sixty-three shillings. On every quarter of oats, weighing 196 pounds, a bounty making the price seventy shillings. On every barrel of fine wheaten flour, weighing 196 pounds, sold by auction, a bounty equal to sixty-eight, seventy-eight, eighty, eighty-eight, and ninety shillings, according to the period of its importation. On every hundred weight of rice from India, a bounty making the price equal to thirty-two shillings; and, if from America, equal to thirty-five shillings. The



reason assigned for this difference was, that rice from India, although brought from a greater distance, is purchased originally at a much lower price; but, by a subsequent resolution, the bounties rendered them equal. On every quarter of peas, a bounty equal to seventy-five shillings; and on every quarter of beans, a bounty equal to fifty shillings.

The Committees of the two Houses afterwards published Reports, on the means, chiefly, of alleviating the present evil, replete with judicious remarks, and wholesome regulations, and no measure, which wisdom could suggest, was omitted to remove the weight of the pressure from the labouring classes of the community. On a subject so interesting to every individual, it cannot be deemed superfluous to state the result of the researches of the intelligent writer, whose opinions have been already cited, respecting the causes of scarcity, in the article of corn, in this country. After shewing that, from the year 1765, we had a great export trade in corn, but that, since the year 1771, a constant import had been necessary for our supply, Mr. Brand proceeds to make the following observations:—

“ Two causes may be assigned for this;—the first of which shall be barely stated, without entering into any discussion upon it.—



Although the number of the inhabitants of the villages be increased, together with their skill in agriculture, whereby its product is considerably augmented; yet it appears evident, that our manufactures, and manufacturers, who are here to be taken as only consumers thereof, have increased with greater celerity;—thus the product of the country is not so great as formerly, in proportion to the number of persons to subsist upon it.

“ The second is,—that a greater consumption of wheat has taken place, by equal numbers of the lower class, in the latter period, than the former. This may be shewn to be in the highest degree probable, from the prices of the table to the end of the war of 1740. For, from the beginning of, to the end of, that term, which considerably exceeded half a century, some advance, and that not inconsiderable, was made in the wages of artizans and labourers in husbandry. But if, contrary to all testimony, and the reason of the thing, we suppose them to have, for that term, remained fixed, the effect of this long fall of prices would be the same in kind, but inferior in degree only.

“ While the price of the grain, reputed the best for bread, was decreasing in every period, and the weekly income of the lower class, who had before very much subsisted on



substitutes for it, was increasing, or even remained fixed, it is natural to suppose that they would desert the use of the latter, or, at least, greatly diminish it, and indulge themselves in that of the former in its stead. At the conclusion of the last, and the beginning of the present, century, a mixture of rye or barley with wheat was very common in the bread of the lower class; the former was called maslin. Houghton, in his collections on trade and husbandry,\* informs us, that barley-bread was in such general use in some parts of England, that of seventeen quarters of corn ground weekly, at a mill in one parish, in Buckinghamshire, sixteen were of barley; and, in Wales, that a bread had been long in use, made of equal weights of wheat-meal and of boiled turnips, the juice being pressed out of them. That bread entirely of wheat was not much eaten by the poor, may be also inferred from what he says of that which was made out of wheat-meal, with the coarse bran sifted out. "This sort," he informs us, "is chiefly in the country, among able folk, that do value good bread."

"But the principal grain used in making bread, together with wheat, or by itself, was rye. In the year 1688, Mr. King computed

\* "Vol. I, No. 90, April 20, 1764."



the quantity of wheat grain, for consumption, at fourteen millions of bushels, and of rye at ten millions.\* Thus taking the consumption to have been as the product, the wheat was only  $\frac{183}{1000}$  of the bread-corn consumed; but, previous to the year 1772, the author of the Political Essays on the British Empire informs us, that the consumption of wheat had increased to 3,840,000, while that of rye had been diminished to 1,039,000 quarters,† therefore the consumption of wheat was now become  $\frac{711}{1000}$  of the whole of our bread corn; or the average consumption of wheat per head was now increased in the proportion of 788 to 583; or that of four to three nearly. This circumstance, joined to the relative increase of our artizans and manufacturers, has chiefly contributed to change our export trade of wheat into an import. The use of inferior corns in bread is now confined to a narrow district; notoriously encroached upon, and diminishing, by the borderers falling into the entire use of wheat.

“ The state of the labourer, in every department, must have been extremely easy in

\* “ Whitworth's Davenant, Vol. II, p. 216.”

† “ P. 97, 98. Account of wheat from the three tracts on the corn trade, that of rye probably from the same writer.”



the first of the terms, that of the fall of prices, ending in the war of 1740. This brought an augmentation of their indulgences, in the use of wheat for rye; which, becoming customary in certain parts of the kingdom, now became to be reputed, at least, as a necessary. This was not the only one of which they contracted such fixed habits, that it became such; others might be mentioned. When the price of wheat and other commodities began to rise greatly, great additions in the poor's rate took place on these two accounts jointly.

In a note, the author proves that an increase of taxes does not tend to produce any augmentation in the price of wheat. This is illustrated by a reference to the system of increased taxation, which took place about the time of the revolution; and, in spite of which the price of wheat fell for more than half a century. All those public men who had adopted false notions, on this subject, and indulged themselves in a train of sophistical reasoning, in fanciful speculations, and in assigning imaginary causes, would do well to refer to those sources of authentic information, of sound argument, and of solid facts, which experience and history supply. A subject which affects the subsistence of a great nation is not to be investigated, with the spirit which marks mere



party discussions, with the levity of wit, the confidence of assertion, or the malignity of invective. It demands, in a peculiar manner, calm inquiry, patient research, and dispassionate judgment.

During this inquiry, and the ferment which the scarcity produced, Mr. Tierney moved, on the 27th of November, for an inquiry into the state of the nation; a motion to which the Members of the Opposition had frequent recourse, as the best means of vilifying his Majesty's Ministers, of extolling their own patriotism, and of inflaming the minds of the people. Mr. Tierney, in the speech with which he prefaced his motion, entered upon all those topics which had been so often discussed during the war, and repeated all the arguments which had been so often brought forward by the Opposition. He was answered, at great length, by Mr. Pitt, who undertook the task of vindicating the Ministers from the aspersions of their opponents. The motion for the inquiry was negatived by one hundred and fifty-seven votes against thirty-seven.

[1801.] Such was the state of public affairs at the opening of the nineteenth century; and to render the prospect more gloomy the hostile confederacy of the Northern powers, which has been alluded to, had acquired a



degree of consistency which threatened materially to affect the commercial and political interests of the kingdom. The principles established by this compact were : — 1. “ Every ship may freely navigate from one harbour to another, and on the coasts of the Belligerent nations.

2. “ The effects which belong to the subjects of the Belligerent powers in neutral ships, with the exception of contraband goods, shall be free.

3. “ In order to determine what shall be considered as a blockaded harbour, such denomination shall be admitted to apply only where the disposition and number of the ships of the power by which it is invested shall be such as to render it apparently hazardous to enter; and that every ship which shall go into a blockaded harbour, that is evidently so blockaded, violates the present convention as much as if the commander of the blockade had previously advised it of the state of the harbour, and it had nevertheless endeavoured, by force or artifice, to obtain admission.

4. “ With regard to neutral ships, except those which for just reasons, and upon evident grounds, shall be detained, sentence shall be pronounced without delay; the proceedings against them shall be uniform, prompt, and



lawful, over and above the indemnity to which they shall be intitled for the damage they have sustained, complete satisfaction shall be given for the insult committed against the flag of their Majesties.

5. "The declaration of the officers who shall command the ship of war, of the King or Emperor, which shall be convoying one or more merchant's ships, that the convoy has no contraband goods on board, shall be sufficient; and that no search of his ship, or the other ships of the convoy, shall be permitted. And the better to insure respect to those principles, and the stipulations founded upon them, which their disinterested wishes to preserve the inprescriptible rights of the neutral nations have suggested, the high contracting parties, to prove their sincerity and justice, will give the strictest orders to their captains, as well of their ships of war, as of their merchant ships, to load no part of their ships, or secretly to have on board any articles, which, by virtue of the present convention, may be considered as contraband; and, for the more completely carrying into execution this command, they will respectively take care to give directions to their Courts of Admiralty to publish it whenever they shall think it necessary, and to this end the regulation, which shall contain this prohibition,



under several penalties, shall be printed at the end of the present act, that no one may plead ignorance."

These principles had been adopted and acted upon by Denmark and Sweden ;—the right of search had been actively resisted ; and all the communications which had taken place between Great Britain and the Northern powers only seemed to demonstrate the firm resolution of the latter to persist in a line of conduct which must reduce this country to the necessity of either degrading herself in the eyes of Europe, by submitting to a wanton violation of her acknowledged rights, or of resisting the assertion of those hostile principles by arms. The Emperor of Russia had carried his violence still farther, by imposing an embargo on all British ships in his ports, and by the sequestration of all British property.

This confederacy, aiming a deadly blow at the maritime power of Great Britain, at a period of severe pressure, when forsaken by her continental allies, and threatened with famine at home, was a counterpart of the memorable *armed neutrality* of 1780, which had the same object in view. An acquiescence in such claims, which went the length of maintaining the right of a neutral power, however insignificant, to carry on, in time of war, the trade of a belli-



gerent power, and to supply her with whatever was necessary for the support of the contest in which she was enraged, would have been equally dangerous and dishonourable. For, if the principle were once admitted, that free bottoms made free goods, and that no merchantmen could be subjected to search which were under the protection of a ship of war, a Danish or a Swedish frigate, might cover the whole foreign and country trade of France, and exempt her from the expence of insurance, and the risk of capture. It was a claim which took from maritime superiority all its lawful advantages, and sheltered weakness beneath the flag of fraud. It contravened all the principles which, for a century, had regulated the conduct of naval powers; and which England, in particular, had always proclaimed, supported, and enforced. It struck, indeed, at the very source of our prosperity, and could not be submitted to without a sacrifice, which must be speedily followed by the loss of our national wealth, greatness, and independence. It was, therefore, resolved by Mr. Pitt to resist this cowardly combination of Northern dictators, to the utmost of our power, and at all hazards; and, every attempt at procuring redress by negotiation having failed, the most active preparations were made to extort it by arms.



The first day of the year 1801 was the period fixed for the legislative Union between the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland to be carried into effect. And, as the King's title must, of necessity, undergo an appropriate alteration, the opportunity was taken, by Ministers, to omit that part of it, which had been the boast and pride of successive generations, by bringing to their recollection the heroic achievements of their ancestors. Henceforth, it was determined, that a British Monarch should not be called "KING OF FRANCE." They who considered this sacrifice as of no importance are little acquainted with the best feelings of human nature, have no notion of some of the finest springs of genuine patriotism, and have a very imperfect sense of that laudable *pride* which is the legitimate parent of national greatness. To remove any one stimulus to the performance of great actions is highly impolitic; and to strip the wings of royalty of one of its brightest feathers, at a moment when jacobinism was daily extending her empire on the ruins of subverted thrones and demolished altars, was to crown the triumph of criminal usurpation, and to establish a principle of concession, neither unimportant in itself, nor innocuous in its consequences. The motive to this sacrifice was the demand made by the republican plenipotentiaries, during the negotiations at Lille, and Ministers,



having no doubt of its renewal, whenever any fresh negotiation should be opened, thought it more prudent to resign the title spontaneously, when no negotiation was on foot, than to wound the national honour by yielding it to the importunate claims of an insolent enemy. Certainly there was not enough of national spirit, in the people of England, at this period, to support a Minister in the resistance of such a claim; but there was an ample sufficiency of disaffection to raise a national clamour at any attempt to make such resistance the means of preventing, or even of retarding, a treaty of peace. Under these circumstances, the Minister might possibly be justified for passing, in the least obnoxious and objectionable way, an act which, he felt, must be performed, in some way or other. And the people have to thank themselves for the disgrace which attached to this loss of an honour which reflected its lustre from the crown upon themselves.

The title which his Majesty now assumed was, in Latin, *Georgius tertius, Dei Gratiâ, Britanniarum, Rex, fidei defensor*; and, in English, "GEORGE THE THIRD, BY THE GRACE OF GOD OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, KING, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH." The arms and flags of the United Kingdom also underwent suitable alterations; a new great seal was made, and appro-



priate changes were directed to be introduced into the book of common prayer, and the forms of ordination and consecration. The members of the Privy Council of Great Britain renewed their oaths; an extensive promotion, in the army and navy, took place; and some of the Irish nobility were advanced to the dignity of Peers of the United Kingdom. Parliament was no longer called the Parliament of Great Britain, but the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or sometimes, in debate, the Imperial Parliament. The House of Lords was augmented by the addition of one Irish Archbishop, and three Bishops, appointed to sit in rotation of sessions; and of twenty-eight temporal Peers, elected for life. The House of Commons was enlarged by one hundred Irish members, of whom sixty-four were representatives of counties, nine of cities, twenty-six of boroughs and towns, and one of the University of Dublin.

It was a question on which a difference of opinion prevailed among lawyers, whether a dissolution of Parliament ought not to have taken place before the opening of the first session of the *Imperial* Parliament; and, indeed, as the members, by the Union, possessed more extensive powers than they had possessed, at the period of their election, by now naving to



legislate for Ireland as well as for Great Britain, there were strong grounds for thinking that it ought to have been an entire new Parliament. It was, however, determined otherwise, and, on the 22d of January, the Parliament was opened by commission. Nothing, however, was done, but swearing in the members, and re-electing Mr. Addington, as Speaker, for the fourth time, till the second of February, when the King attended in Parliament.

The period which elapsed, between the meeting of Parliament, and the delivery of the speech from the Throne, was unusually long; but its length was occasioned by a difference of opinion, which, unhappily, prevailed on a political subject of great importance, between the King and his Ministers. The Cabinet were desirous to mark the opening of the Imperial Parliament by a measure which, in their estimation, would be both popular and salutary;—that is, by removing all those barriers which the Papists chose to consider as an impediment to their admission to a full share of political power and privileges with their fellow-subjects of the Established Church. When Mr. Pitt had adverted to this subject, in introducing his propositions for an Union to the House of Commons, on the last day of January, 1799, he had expressed himself, with the utmost caution,



and had studiously avoided to give any pledge or promise, that, if the Union should take place, he would bring forward a proposal for the repeal of the test laws. He said—“*When the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure, when these events take place* it is obvious that the question *may be* agitated in an united, imperial, Parliament, with much greater safety than it could be in a separate legislature.” Here Mr. Pitt merely declared his *opinion*, that a subject of this nature would be more impartially discussed, by an united than by a separate legislature; and he certainly was of opinion, also, that the danger which would have attended such a measure before the Union would no longer subsist, or, at least, in a very subordinate degree, after the Union. Two conditions, however, he here distinctly stated, as indispensable to the introduction of any proposition of the kind; namely, a change in the conduct of the Catholics; and the existence of a disposition in the public favourable to the measure. If inquiry be made whether either of these cases existed at the present moment; whether either of the two conditions, without the existence of both of



which, at the same moment, it would, according to Mr. Pitt's own principle, be improper to bring forward a proposition for admitting Papists to all the offices in the State without a compliance with the forms which a Protestant was obliged to observe, it will be found that neither of them did exist, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. That the conduct of the Irish Papists had experienced no change, that the spirit of rebellion was still secretly brooding over the work of destruction so congenial to it, and still threatened to desolate that devoted country, is evident from Mr. Pitt's own admission, in little more than a month after the King opened the Imperial Parliament. In a debate, on the 12th of March, on a motion of Lord Castlereagh, respecting martial law in Ireland, Mr. Pitt, speaking in defence of the motion, and in proof of its necessity, from the internal state of the country, observed, "under the baneful influence of jacobinism, your enemies, though defeated in the field, only separate; *the vital principle of enmity to order, and social comfort, still remains*, confined, indeed, in scantier bounds, and with diminished means, though *with undiminished rancour*. The prerogative of exercising martial law, which was adequate to a sudden attack, and to a pressing danger, is not equal to contend with *a rebellion*,



*founded on principles so secret, so disseminated, so powerful, and so persevering.*" Here then were evident marks of the same spirit which prevailed in 1798, and which had rendered Ireland a scene of devastation and blood. As to the *temper of the times*, or the disposition of the public, it displayed not a single proof of partiality or favour to the removal of those barriers which our ancestors had deemed essential to the preservation of the constitution. Indeed, the numerous publications which issued from the press, as soon as the intentions of Ministers were known, clearly demonstrated, that a vast majority of the nation concurred with their Sovereign in his opinion of the impropriety, impolicy, and danger of such an attempt, and Mr. Pitt, himself, very soon became convinced of this fact.

If, then, neither of the circumstances stated as indispensable to the adoption of the proposed measure could be found to exist, it might be supposed, and, indeed, it was broadly insinuated, that some secret pledge had been given to the Irish Catholics, to induce them to favour the Union. But, it is most certain, as I have before stated,\* that no pledge or promise, open or secret, express or implied, was ever given, directly or indirectly, by Mr. Pitt, or

\* See P. 242.



by his authority, to bring forward, or to support, the Catholic Question. It might be presumed, then, that he had either altered his sentiments as to the *fitness* of the time for proposing it; had abandoned his original ideas on that point, on some notions of political expediency, which it would be difficult to appreciate; or else have yielded to the less cautious policy, and pressing suggestions, of some of his colleagues. Whatever was the cause, it is certain, that he now concurred, in opinion, with the majority of the Cabinet, that the dawn of the Union should be ushered in by an admission of those importunate claims which had hitherto been so firmly, and so wisely, resisted by the Irish Legislature, pliant and yielding as it was in its general policy to the Catholics. This point having been settled in the Cabinet, it was resolved to introduce a recommendation of the measure in the speech to be delivered from the Throne, at the opening of the Imperial Parliament. But it was necessary, in the first place, to remove from the mind of his Majesty those impressions which it was known to have imbibed, respecting the proposed concessions to the Papists. The performance of this difficult and delicate task, is understood to have been consigned to Mr. Dundas, (now Viscount Melville) and a more able advocate, perhaps, could



not have been selected for the purpose. Of a conference which passed in the Royal Closet, few particulars can be expected to have transpired. It is very well known, however, that the powerful eloquence of Mr. Dundas, though exerted with a zeal adequate to the great occasion which called for its display, completely failed to shake the firm resolution of the Monarch. Indeed, his Majesty was too well grounded in those principles on which alone a just decision of the question at issue could be formed, to be either deluded by casuistry, however ingenious, to be foiled by argument however plausible, or to be betrayed by metaphysical distinctions, however subtle, into admissions which his conscience rejected, and his reason disavowed. He had very long, and very deeply, considered the subject; and the result of that consideration was the firm conviction that he could not, consistently with the solemn obligation which he had contracted, at the period of his coronation, and confirmed by the religious sanction of an oath, assent to the introduction of Popish Peers, Prelates, and Commoners, into the Imperial Parliament, and into the high offices of state; as, by so doing, he should fail to "maintain, *to the utmost of his power*, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion



established by law.”\* It was, no doubt, urged by Mr. Dundas, as it was by others at the time, that this oath could only apply to the maintenance of the Protestant religion, as from time to time it *should be* the Church Establishment of the country, and that it would be absurd, in the extreme, and unconstitutional, to contend, that the expression in question pre-

\* The words of the coronation oath, prescribed by Stat. 1. W. and M. c. 6. “ I once heard it roundly asserted,” says a sensible writer on this subject, “ that, if the Houses of Lords and Commons should agree on a bill for subverting the Protestant establishment in Ireland, his Majesty, notwithstanding his coronation oath, would be bound to give it the royal assent, and thereby establish it as a law, because his coronation oath, in all particulars, is so to be construed, that it is not binding against the opinion of the two Houses. I never can agree with such reasoning,”—(or rather with such egregious folly) “ I cannot find any such saving in the coronation oath,—it is an absolute oath ; and I never can allow that the two Houses of Parliament have any such power as that of dispensing with the obligations of positive oaths. I believe and hope that the Parliament never will assume the power of absolving from the observance of oaths ;—it would thereby assume the power arrogated by the Pope, which is so much, and so justly, reprobated by all good christians. And, as his Majesty is bound by his coronation oath inviolably to maintain the Protestant religion as it is now established in Ireland, so is he bound to resist all concession of privileges to any class of his subjects, which would impair or weaken that establishment ; though, perhaps, they would not be at first attended, or immediately followed, by its total subversion.”



cluded his Majesty from concurring with both Houses of Parliament, in *any legislative act whatever*.<sup>\*</sup> But his Majesty, who was not less conversant with the history of the times in which that oath was originally framed, with the causes which produced it, the object to which it was directed, and the principles which influenced its adoption, than he was resolute in religiously observing it, could have no difficulty in proving the fallacy of this loose and unwarrantable construction. Most unfortunately, indeed, for such a position, the very case which now occurred, had, in a manner, been foreseen; for, while the form of the coronation oath was under discussion in the House of Commons, in the year 1689, an amendment was proposed, (obviously for the purpose of preventing the very objection which the King now pressed) that, instead of "*religion established by law*," it should run thus: "AS SHALL BE *established by law*,"† in order, as it was alleged, that the King might not be restrained by this oath from consenting to the alterations which it was then in contemplation to make, for tolerating Protestant Dissenters, in the free exer-

<sup>\*</sup> See a Letter to a Nobleman from Charles Butler, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn.

† See Grey's Debates, March 28, 1689.

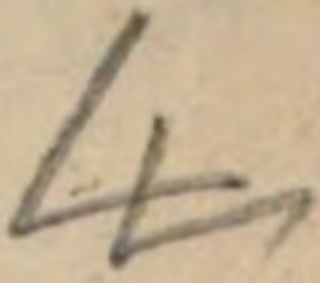


cise of their religion;—so clearly did it appear to the legislators of that day, that the oath would have, and *was intended to have*, the effect of preventing the King from assenting to any act, which would endanger the Protestant establishment, by admitting those who were not members of the church to the same privileges which churchmen enjoyed. The amendment was rejected, not with a view to prevent the *toleration* of *Protestant* dissenters, but because it was considered that the oath was so worded as to admit of the King's assent to such a measure, which could not, it was conceived, endanger the Protestant establishment. From the proceedings on this occasion, it is perfectly evident, that the Parliament intended so to frame the oath as to prevent the King from exposing the Established Church to danger, by the admission of Papists to offices of trust.

Fully impressed with these ideas on the subject, it is not surprizing that his Majesty should have resisted every effort to persuade him that he might safely and conscientiously acquiesce in the measure proposed by his Ministers. He is said to have abruptly terminated the conference by an observation on the inefficacy of Scotch metaphysics to destroy religious obligations. It must not, however, be inferred, from this conduct, on the part of



Mr. Pitt, that he was either an unsteady, or an indifferent, member of the Established Church. He certainly was, from education, from principle, and from conviction, firmly attached to it; and had he believed that danger could result to it from the measure which the Cabinet wished to adopt, no earthly consideration would have induced him to assent to it. He had assuredly convinced himself that it might safely be adopted, with the guards with which he proposed to accompany it. In repealing the existing test, it was the intention of Mr. Pitt to propose a substitute which the Papists might conscientiously take, and which, he was of opinion, would answer every purpose of the other. Fully convinced as I am, that no adequate substitute for the test provided by our ancestors, could be devised by human wisdom, I am incompetent to speak, with decision, of the merits or defects, the efficacy or inefficacy, of Mr. Pitt's project to promote the same end by different means;—because all my endeavours to ascertain, with precision, the nature of the new test which he proposed to adopt, have proved unavailing. Indeed, from what I have been able to collect on the subject, I incline to believe, that Mr. Pitt had not sufficiently digested and matured his plan to reduce it to form, to put it into that regular





shape in which it might be submitted to discussion. I have no reason to think, that any written copy of it is in existence. It is certain, however, that Mr. Pitt's *intention* was, as has been stated by a competent judge, who had ample opportunity for ascertaining it, "to do away, as far as might be practicable, the mischievous effects of difference in religious opinions; to guard the established church, by more powerful sanctions, against both Papists and Protestant Dissenters, and to give the cause of religion that additional protection which the prevalence of infidelity demanded;"—and that it was Mr. Pitt's opinion, that his new test was "better adapted to the present times, and far more effectual, than the existing laws."\* But with all the deference which I am disposed to pay to the judgment of this eminent Statesman, I cannot but think that it failed him on this occasion; and, while I know that it was his earnest desire to strengthen and secure the Established Church, to which he was zealously attached, by all practicable means, I am persuaded that he grossly deceived himself, in the present instance; and I am confirmed in that

\* A Speech on the Character of the Right Honourable William Pitt, delivered in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, Dec. 17th, 1806, being commemoration day. By Edward Pretyman Tomline.



persuasion, by the conduct of a respectable prelate, who so well justified the confidence which Mr. Pitt reposed in him, by stating to him, in strong and forcible terms, his conviction of the danger of removing the existing test, and the utter impossibility of finding an adequate substitute. But, unhappily for himself, and for the nation, Mr. Pitt was greatly misinformed and misled, on the Catholic Question, more especially as it related to Ireland. It is, indeed, a matter of astonishment, that a mind so intelligent as Mr. Pitt's should not have immediately perceived the fallacy of the pretext urged to persuade him to the adoption of a measure, of, at least, doubtful policy, however partially it might be viewed, and of most momentous import;—a measure by which every thing would be risked; and, at best, but little gained. It could only gratify the nobility and gentry of the Romish faith, comparatively few in numbers, and certainly least formidable to the State; while it would leave untouched the sources of that misery and poverty under which the great mass of the Irish Papists, the farmers and the peasantry, laboured.—By opening the legislative Councils, and the great offices of State, to Papists, the ambition of the opulent few could alone be satisfied, while the distresses or grievances of the poor multitude would remain unrelieved and unredressed. To what



ever sources, then, the popular disaffection which had agitated Ireland, and had, more than once, brought her to the very verge of destruction, might be traced or imputed;—the measure now resolved on by the Cabinet, could have no effect in removing it, except on a supposition which would falsify one of the principal reasons alleged in support of that measure. It could only be believed to operate so as to quell disaffection and to restore tranquillity, by the influence of those whom alone the measure was calculated to please. And, therefore, this belief must be founded on the supposition, that the Catholic nobility and gentry had such an ascendancy over the great mass of the Papists, as to render them obedient to their orders, and subservient to their will, whence it would naturally follow, that they might have prevented or suppressed the rebellion of 1798, had they been so disposed;—but that they would not exert their power, until they had wrested from the government a full compliance with all their claims. The conclusion is inevitable, and cannot be shaken. But such a supposition would be a greater libel on the Irish nobility and gentry of the Romish persuasion than was ever uttered, a more severe reflection on their conduct and principles, than was ever cast, by the most strenuous opposer of their claims. It

*Slavery*



must be founded on a belief that they were capable of betraying the best interests of their country, of raising the standard of rebellion against their Sovereign, of endeavouring to subvert the established constitution of the realm, of coolly contemplating the destructive progress of murder and desolation through their native land, from an impulse of selfish resentment, from a motive of disappointed ambition. It would fix on them the degrading stigma, the foul disgrace, of having sacrificed the most imperative duties at the sordid shrine of interest. It would make their loyalty, not a principle of duty, but a subject of barter. And all the dishonourable conduct, thus imputed to them, would want even the pretext which *religious persecution* supplies, for they already enjoyed a full and perfect toleration; and what they claimed was not religious privileges, but political power.—If they really deserved this opinion, their conduct could not be “such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the Established Church.” As, however, it would be the height of injustice to cast such unmerited reproaches on so respectable a body of subjects as the Popish nobility and gentry of Ireland, considered in the aggregate, it is impossible to admit the conclusion of Ministers, that



their proposed measure would be productive of the beneficial effect which they, inconsiderately, ascribed to it.

So much has been said on the general question of the expediency and wisdom of the Test Laws, in the preceding parts of this history, that there can be no necessity for entering into a fresh discussion of the subject; especially as nothing new was urged, on the present occasion, to justify a departure from the wise policy of our ancestors. Besides the weight of the reasons already urged, there was another powerful consideration, which, I should have thought, would have had great influence with such a *practical* statesman as Mr. Pitt. The proposed indulgence to the Papists was certainly a *speculative* measure; it had not the sanction of *experience*; on the contrary, experience was against it, for every concession hitherto made to the Papists, particularly within the last few years, had produced nothing but increased disorder, and wider disaffection. Now it was contrary to one of the acknowledged maxims of Mr. Pitt's policy, and, indeed, repugnant to his general conduct, to oppose *speculation* to *experience*; *theory* to *practice*. It has been well observed, by a writer, at once simple and profound, plain in language, but deep in thought, who has studied the Constitution of this coun-



try with a truly philosophic mind,—that “a determination to preserve the Constitution as it is, must ever be allowed, at least, a safe policy; it is only going on as we have done: but the experiment of an alteration may lead us into mischiefs, which the innovator himself never intended; such as no human foresight could predict, and no human ingenuity may ever redress. The wisdom of “not doing” is, therefore, a wisdom which should ever be respected; it generally is coupled with knowledge, and with experience; and it is sure of this good effect, that it makes a pause, in which others may have leisure to learn caution and prudence.”

✓ This is the language of practical wisdom; such wisdom as should be allowed alike to regulate the concerns of domestic life, and the operations of a government; such, in short, as Mr. Pitt displayed, through the whole course of his political career, with a solitary exception applicable to his conduct at this critical period of his administration, and on this particular point. I cannot but conceive, that he now suffered his better judgment to be led astray by the confidence of inferior minds; allowed himself to be directed where he ought to have directed others; and gave his assent to a measure, the fatal consequences of which he certainly did not appreciate, from misrepresentations which



he had not the means of correcting, and to which, his reliance on the reports of those who saw objects through a false medium, induced him, too implicitly, perhaps, to trust.

Enough, possibly, may have been said, in the course of the remarks on the state of Ireland, and on the concessions granted, at different periods, to the Papists of that country, respecting the dangerous tenets of the Church of Rome. But as efforts were now made to persuade the Protestant community, numbers of whom had had but little occasion to investigate the subject, that a total change had taken place, in the principles of the modern Papists, which removed the danger to be apprehended to the state from some of the tenets of their ancestors; and as the King was, irreverently enough, rendered a party in many of the public discussions; it becomes a duty, in a Protestant writer, to correct the effects of misrepresentation, and to place the question before his readers in a plain point of view.

By those who contend for the reality of this change, it is, of course, admitted, that the Catholics of former days did maintain tenets and principles incompatible with the safety of a Protestant State. Whence did these tenets and principles arise? Certainly from the decretals of the Popes, or the decrees of the Councils,



the only infallible authority, on points of doctrine, admitted by Papists. If, then, it be proved, that these decretals, or these decrees, retain the same importance, and the same authority, in the estimation of modern Papists, which they possessed in the eyes of their ancestors; and if, setting aside, for the better confirmation of the argument, the admission before stated, it can be demonstrated, that the decretals of the Popes, or the decrees of the General Councils of the Church of Rome, did promulgate tenets hostile to the existence of a Protestant establishment, the loose assertion of a radical change in their principles will be overthrown, and the vain fabric erected upon it will fall to the dust, by the removal of its sandy foundation. On such a subject, recourse must be had to papal authorities, which are, indeed, the least objectionable that can be urged on a point of this nature.

The first authority to be quoted, is one particularly apposite and strong, because universally recognized by the Papists of Ireland. DR. TROY, the Romish Archbishop of Dublin, and, of course, a man of weight and consideration with persons of his own persuasion, and, moreover, deriving his power immediately from the Pope, published, in the year 1793, a pastoral letter, the object of which was to explain



the nature of the Papal Supremacy, and to shew, that all Romanists were bound to pay implicit obedience to the authority of General Councils. The following passage is extracted from that letter:

“ It is a *fundamental article* of the Roman Catholic faith, that the Pope, or Bishop, of Rome, is successor to Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles; in that see he enjoys, by divine right, a spiritual and ecclesiastical supremacy, not only of honour and rank, but of *real jurisdiction and authority*, in the universal church. Roman Catholics conceive this point as clearly established in the scriptures, and by the constant tradition of the fathers, in every age, as it is by *the express decisions of their General Councils, which they consider as INFAL-*  
*LIBLE AUTHORITY in points of doctrine.*”

Here then it is clearly established, by an authority, the validity of which no Papist will presume to question, that the decrees of the General Councils were infallible authority, in points of doctrine, with the Papists of the eighteenth century, as much as with those of any preceding age. Here was not only no change avowed, but a continued and express uniformity of belief, directly asserted. In fact, nothing but the most profound ignorance of the practice of Papists, and of the tenets of



their church, or the most inveterate determination to misrepresent them, could have led any one to assert the existence of a change which struck at the fundamental doctrine of *infallibility*. This point, then, of the implicit obedience of Papists to the decrees of their General Councils being established, on indisputable authority, nothing more would be requisite to destroy the arguments of those who contend for the change in their principles, as a ground for further indulgence, since they must proceed on the implied admission, that the tenets of the Romish church were formerly dangerous to a Protestant State, else the supposed change could supply no possible reason for extended indulgence. But it will not be useless to prove, by a decree of one of those Councils, that they did propagate tenets, most hostile to all but Popish establishments. The third chapter of the fourth Council of Lateran, holden in 1215, contains a general injunction to all *secular powers to exterminate heretics*, and then proceeds thus:

“ But if any temporal Lord neglect to purge his dominions of such heretical corruption, after being required and admonished by the church, by his *Metropolitans*, and his other provincial Bishops, so to do, *let him be immediately bound in the chains of excommunication*;



and if he shall contumaciously refuse to make satisfaction, and to submit himself to the church within the year, *let this be signified to the Pope, who shall thereupon declare his subjects absolved from their allegiance, and proclaim his territories open to the just seizure and occupation of Catholic powers, who, after they have exterminated the heretics, shall possess them without controul, and preserve them in the purity of the faith, still preserving the title of the principal Lord, provided he shall give them no interruption, or oppose any impediment to their proceedings; and let the same rule be observed with respect to those who have no principal Lords, i. e. Republics.*

“ We decree, that not only those who profess heretical tenets, but all receivers, protectors, and favourers, of heretics, are *ipso facto*, excommunicated; and we strictly ordain and command that, after any such shall be publicly branded with excommunication, if they shall refuse to make satisfaction and submit themselves to the church within a year, *they shall be infamous, nor shall they be admitted to any public office or council, nor to elect any persons to such, nor to give testimony in any cause; neither shall they be capable of making wills, nor of succession, as heirs or representatives, to any estate; they shall be incapable of suing in any court, but may themselves be sued:*



*if any such person shall happen to be a judge of any court, his sentence shall be null and void, nor shall any cause be prosecuted before him: if he shall happen to be an advocate, he shall not be admitted to practise: if a notary, instruments, drawn up, prepared, witnessed, or executed, by him, shall also be void and of no effect, but condemned with their guilty framer: and we command that the same rule be observed in all similar cases. But if he be a clergyman, let him be deposed both ab officio et beneficio, that as his crime is the greater, so the greater may be his punishment."*

It is impossible to read this decree, and Doctor Troy's Letter, without concluding, that the General Councils promulgate tenets incompatible with the safety of a Protestant government, and that all Papists consider the decrees of General Councils as infallible, and hold themselves bound to obey them. This decree, indeed, affords a pretty significant exposition of that "*real jurisdiction and authority*," which the Pope not only exercises over Catholic Communities, but over *Protestant*, or *Heretical*, States; a jurisdiction and authority, however *spiritual* in its origin, most *temporal* in its application and punishments; dissolving, at its pleasure, the ties of allegiance, releasing subjects from their oaths of obedience, dispossessing



Monarchs of their lawful thrones, and inflicting arbitrary punishments without any regard to the laws of the country in which the offender may live.

It was natural to suppose, that Ministers, before they attempted to place Papists upon the same footing with Protestants, or rather, on a more advantageous footing, (because they were to be entitled to the same privileges without submitting to the same conditions) they would call upon them formally, and unequivocally, to renounce the doctrine contained in the above decree; and to express their dissent from the declaration of Dr. Troy, that they were bound to obey all the decrees and decisions of the General Councils; because, it was clear that if they acted up to their principles, and obeyed the decree, above cited, the privileges which they actually enjoyed, instead of being extended, ought to be materially curtailed. There is no false reasoning, in these observations; no forced construction of doubtful passages; no imputation of motives, or of acts, except such as are publicly avowed by the Papists themselves. God forbid, however, that any thing here advanced should be construed into a wish to encourage a spirit of religious intolerance; no, let every denomination of Christians experience from the British government perfect



liberty of conscience, and the fullest toleration; and such the Papists of Ireland enjoyed at this period, and still continue to enjoy. But between *toleration* and *encouragement* the difference is substantive and essential. Nor when the facts above stated are duly considered, and, moreover, that a Popish Bishop, at his consecration, takes an oath, not only to preserve and defend, but to *augment* and *promote*, the Papal power; and farther says, “heretics, schismatics, and rebels, to our holy father, and his successors, *I shall resist and persecute to my power*,” can it be regarded as intolerant to contend for the necessity of keeping a watchful and jealous eye over the professors of such dangerous tenets. It does, indeed, appear to me to be a duty incumbent on all Roman Catholics who assert their right to a full participation of political power, not merely to make general professions of loyalty and attachment to the constitution, but explicitly to disclaim the authority of this Council of Lateran; for, if that be deemed binding, as Dr. Troy maintains the decisions of all General Councils to be, to assert that no danger can accrue to a Protestant government from the admission of their claims to an equality of political power, is to offer an insult to the common sense of the nation. Every one must wish to see Catholics in possession of



every privilege compatible with the safety of the establishment; but when their prelates are bound by an oath to the *resistance* and *persecution* of all the members of the established church; and are also subjected to a foreign authority, claiming the right of absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance; every consistent Protestant must enter his protest against the admission of claims, which, under these circumstances, cannot but be regarded as totally incompatible with the safety of the British Constitution, in Church and State.

As the King remained firm to his point, it was necessary for the Ministers to consider what line of conduct it became them now to pursue. It was clear that there existed no necessity for entering into any discussion of this difficult question; it was equally clear, that, as no pledge had been given, there could be no necessity for the Ministers to press the point against the will of their Sovereign; and even conceiving, as it must be supposed they did, that the measure in question would promote the welfare and tranquillity of the country, still they might go on, as they had hitherto done, and postpone its consideration to a future opportunity. They, however, thought otherwise, and, not having been able to carry their point, they chose, even in the most critical



situation of public affairs, to resign their places. Mr. Pitt was determined, however, to render his resignation as little distressing to his Sovereign as possible; and he therefore consented not only to remain in office until a new administration should be arranged, but even to perform one of the least pleasing, and most difficult, duties of a Minister, in providing ways and means for defraying the expences of the current year.

This point being so far settled, the King opened the Parliament on the second of February; when he expressed great satisfaction in being enabled, at a crisis so important, to avail himself, for the first time, of the Parliament of his United Kingdom. This memorable æra, distinguished by the accomplishment of a measure calculated to augment and consolidate the strength and resources of the empire, and to cement more closely the interests and affections of his subjects, would, he trusted, be equally marked by that vigour, energy, and firmness, which circumstances so peculiarly required. His Majesty stated, as matter of astonishment, as well as regret, that the continental powers appeared more engaged in endeavours to weaken the naval force of the British empire, the great obstacle to the inordinate ambition of



France, than in concerting means of mutual defence against their common and increasing danger. The representations presented to the Court of Petersburgh, in consequence of the late outrages, had been treated with the utmost disrespect, and aggravated by subsequent acts of injustice and violence; and a convention had avowedly been concluded between Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, for establishing, by force, a new code of maritime law, inconsistent with the rights, and hostile to the interests, of this country. In this situation, his Majesty had taken the earliest opportunity to repel the aggressions of this hostile confederacy, and support the legal and recognized principles so essential to the maintenance of our naval strength; but had, at the same time, given assurances which manifested his disposition to renew his ancient relations with those powers, whenever it could be done with a just regard to the safety of his subjects; and he was persuaded, Parliament would omit nothing which could afford him vigorous and effectual support in his firm determination to maintain to the utmost, against every attack, the naval rights, and the interests, of the empire.

After recommending to the two Houses the great object of improving the benefits of the



Union, and the consideration of means for removing the existing scarcity, his Majesty assured them that he would seize the earliest opportunity of terminating, consistently with security and honour, the present contest.

The address was carried by very large majorities in both Houses. Mr. Cornwallis, by whom it was seconded in the Commons, observed, in relation to the Union, that, in order to give it full effect, many measures, naturally consecutive upon it, would, no doubt, be, from time to time, adopted. To heal divisions, it was to be desired that nothing *consistent with the full security of the Protestant religion in Ireland* should be omitted. This expression gave offence to Mr. Grey, who, in opposing the address, remarked, that he should have augured more favourably of the Union, had he found that the King's speech contained a recommendation (as it was reported it would) to consider of taking off those disabilities to which the Catholics of Ireland were subject. Mr. Grey must have known, that no *disabilities* were imposed by the law on Catholics more than on Protestants;—every situation was equally open to all subjects, on the observance of a condition equally imposed upon all;—and, if the Catholic did not choose to observe that condition, the disability was imposed by himself, and not by



the Legislature. He proceeded to remark that, the surest means of incorporating the two countries, and cementing their connection, would be to extend to all, in common, the blessings of the constitution. Here again he insinuated, that the Catholics of Ireland were deprived of those blessings, as if the blessings of the British constitution consisted in the ability to hold about thirty of the highest offices in the State, without subscribing the test which had been expressly formed for the defence of that constitution! He expressed his regret that no such measure was hinted at; and he declared that he felt a great degree of jealousy, at a phrase in the speech of Mr. Cornwallis, alluding to "*what might be consistent with the security of the Protestant religion?*" That a professed whig, who admired the principles of the revolution, and so frequently reminded the House of Brunswick, that those principles had placed them on the Throne, should be jealous of too great a regard for the security of the Protestant religion, the protection of which, and the dread of Popery, occasioned the revolution, was well calculated to excite surprize. In the course of his speech, Mr. Grey adverted to all the topics connected with the conduct of Ministers, which he freely censured with his usual asperity



of language; modestly contending, that the Minority spoke the sense of the nation.

This position was controverted by Mr. Pitt, who defended the conduct of Ministers from the groundless imputations of their opponents. He animadverted, with particular strength, on the scepticism of Mr. Grey, with respect to the rights which they had asserted in the dispute with the Northern powers; and he clearly shewed, that the conduct of those powers was in direct violation, not only of the recognized law of nations, and established practice, but of particular treaties by which each of them was bound to this country. But Mr. Pitt did not advert to the peculiar situation of the Cabinet, nor even uttered a word respecting the Union. The division was 245 against 63; almost as great a majority as Mr. Pitt could boast during the meridian of his power.

In a very few days the approaching change of Ministers became a matter of public notoriety, and, on the tenth of February, Lord Grenville, in the House of Peers, avowed the fact. He observed that, some time before, Lord Spencer, Lord Chatham, himself, and several others of the Ministry, who were members of the House of Commons, had thought it *expedient* that the benefits of the Union should be rendered as



great and as extensive as possible, by the removal of certain disabilities, under which a great portion of the inhabitants of Ireland laboured. "Imagining," he said, "that this measure could alone be effectual, if, coming from the executive government, we felt it our duty to propose it to those who direct his Majesty's Councils. It was not deemed eligible, and we were unable to prevail. Our opinion of its *policy* remaining unaltered, and still thinking that, and that alone, could establish the tranquillity and prosperity of the empire on a permanent basis, we considered ourselves bound to retire. Accordingly, we tendered to his Majesty the resignation of our several employments; and he has been graciously pleased to dispense with our services. Thus, my Lords, we only hold our offices till our successors are appointed." His Lordship expressed a warm sense of his Majesty's uniform attention to him, during the course of his administration, and of the flattering marks of royal regard, which had accompanied his resignation. After commenting on the good effects of past exertions, he adverted to his successors in office, and added,—“It is our consolation to reflect, that the same vigorous line of conduct will still be pursued. Though we have retired from office, no change



of measures will take place; but the system which has already proved so salutary will continue to be acted upon by our successors; though we may differ from them in some points, in most there is no difference between us, and while they continue to act in a firm, resolute, and manly manner, they shall have our steady support. Our most anxious wish is, that they may receive from your Lordships, and the public, the same support which we have experienced. Divisions, indecision, timidity, and despondency, must, at the present moment, be ruin. It is only by unanimity and firmness that the country can be saved." These manly and liberal sentiments did honour to his Lordship; but, as he so feelingly described the evil effect of divisions, at this critical period, it was naturally enquired, how he could think of disturbing the unanimity which prevailed, by the unnecessary discussion of a question particularly calculated to provoke dissension. Lord Spencer confirmed the accuracy of Lord Grenville's statement of the cause of the change in the Ministry.

On the same day, Mr. Addington notified, to the House of Commons, his acceptance of a high situation under the Crown, and his consequent resignation of the Speaker's chair; and, on the following day, Sir John Mitford (now



Lord Redesdale) was chosen to succeed him. On the eighteenth of February, Mr. Pitt performed his last ministerial act, by opening the budget. In a committee of supply, the House had previously resolved, that the complement of men for the navy, for the current year, should be 135,000, including 30,000 marines, being 15,000 more men than had been employed in 1800;—and had voted for the army 193,187 regulars, which, with 78,046 militias, and 31,415 fencibles, in Britain and Ireland, composed an effective force, independent of volunteers, of 302,648 men. The House, being now formed into a committee of ways and means, Mr. Pitt first directed his attention to that part of the estimates which, under the provisions of the Union, were to be jointly borne by Great Britain and Ireland, describing, first, the charges to be incurred, and then the means by which he proposed to provide for them. The whole of the supplies were as follows:

| £          |              |           |            |
|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Navy.....  |              |           | 15,800,000 |
| Army {     | England..    | 9,617,000 | 12,117,000 |
|            | Do. extras.  | 2,500,000 |            |
|            | Ireland..... | 3,785,000 |            |
|            |              |           | 15,902,000 |
| Ordnance { | England..... | 1,639,000 | 1,938,000  |
|            | Ireland..... | 299,000   |            |



|                             |                          |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Miscellaneous               | { England..... } 550,000 | } 757,000          |
|                             | { Ireland..... } 207,000 |                    |
| Vote of Credit              | { England..... } 500,000 | } 800,000          |
|                             | { Ireland..... } 300,000 |                    |
| Irish permanent grants..... |                          | 390,462            |
| Total..                     |                          | <u>£35,587,462</u> |

The relative proportion of expences to be paid by the two countries, as settled by the act of Union, was two-seventeenths by Ireland, and fifteen-seventeenths by Great Britain. These Mr. Pitt stated, therefore, under distinct heads. The permanent charge in this country, for the civil list, and other demands on the consolidated fund, not relating to the public debt, were, however, to be allotted in due proportion; they amounted to £1,170,000, two-seventeenths of which being to be borne by Ireland, and being added to her share of the sum before stated, would make the whole of her burden £4,324,000. Whatever else remained, except the national debt of Ireland, was to be provided for by Great Britain. The demands, attaching exclusively to England, were such as arose from causes existing before the period of the Union. The first of these, mentioned by Mr. Pitt, proceeded from the late unfavourable seasons, which had affected several branches of the public revenue; and he did not think it right, according to a fair and liberal construction of the



articles of Union, that Ireland should bear any share in the defalcation so produced. Other deficiencies to be supplied solely by England were specified, of which the general abstract was:—To make good the deficiency of the income tax for 1800, £1,000,000; discount upon the loan and lottery, £200,000; deficiency of malt duties of 1799, £400,000; to pay off Exchequer bills issued on the credit of the assessed taxes of 1798, the imports and exports, and the income duties of 1799, £1,350,000; interest of the Exchequer Bills, £460,000; for the Sinking Fund, £200,000; to pay off Exchequer Bills issued on the Consolidated Fund, £3,000,000;—making a total of £6,610,000. Thus it appeared, the whole charge on the two countries would amount to £42,197,000, of which Ireland was to pay £4,324,000, and England the remainder.

Mr. Pitt next detailed the Ways and Means. The permanent resources of the country, including the duties on sugar, malt, and tobacco; the lottery, the income tax, after deducting the interest with which it was charged, the duty upon exports and imports, the surplus of the consolidated fund, the sum to be provided by Ireland, a sum not issued for subsidies, and the surplus of grants, he rated at £16,744,000. So that it would be necessary to raise a loan of £25,500,000 in order to make up the sum



necessary for the service of the year. This loan, though it was now the tenth year of an expensive war, Mr. Pitt had raised on terms highly advantageous to the country, and highly honourable to the monied men, who seemed emulous to prove the solidity of the national resources, by taking the loan without any bonus or premium, except the discount of £3. 12s. per cent. for prompt payment, which, as they had taken the stock at a higher rate than the market price, would reduce the profit to two per cent. The interest on this sum Mr. Pitt proposed to pay, by a new duty of ten per cent. on all teas\* sold at the Company's sales for more than half a crown per pound; by doubling the existing duty on paper, with certain exceptions; by an additional duty of 2½d. per yard on all printed cottons, which now paid 3½d. per yard duty; by a duty of 1s. 10d. per cwt. on sugar; by an increase of one-third on the existing duty on timber, and of four per cent. on its value; by new duties on pepper, raisins, and lead; by a new duty on horses, where only one was kept for pleasure, ten shil-

\* This striking fact appeared in Mr. Pitt's statement.—The measures which he had adopted for the repression of contraband trade had been so effective, that, though only 6,000,000 pounds of tea had been sold, before the Commutation act passed, the sale had now increased to 22,000,000.



lings; where more than one, twenty shillings; and on horses used in husbandry, four shillings. The Stamp duties on bills, notes, sea policies, and deeds, were to be augmented, and the rates of postage of letters to be raised. The amount of the interest to be thus provided for was £1,785,000; and the produce of the proposed taxes was estimated as follows:—

|                     | £.          |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Tea.....            | 300,000     |
| Paper.....          | 132,000     |
| Printed Cotton..... | 154,000     |
| Sugar.....          | 166,000     |
| Pepper.....         | 119,000     |
| Stamps.....         | 350,000     |
| Horses.....         | 306,000     |
| Post Office.....    | 150,000     |
| Timber.....         | 95,000      |
| Raisins.....        | 10,000      |
| Lead.....           | 12,000      |
|                     | <hr/>       |
|                     | £ 1,794,000 |
|                     | <hr/>       |

Mr. Pitt expressed his regret at the failure of his expectations, respecting the produce of the income tax, by which he was obliged to reduce his estimate, which was originally ten millions, to six millions. Still, though this tax would not answer the whole of the purpose for which it had been destined, it had been productive of the best effects, by reducing the amount of loans, and by increasing the facility of raising



them. And he was of opinion, that it should be continued, as it then was, until, with the aid of the sinking fund, the national debt should be reduced to the amount at which it stood in the year 1798, when the income tax was first proposed; and this reduction would be completed in six years.

He mentioned, as a proof of the prosperous state of the country, that the amount of the revenue for the year ending in January, 1801, had exceeded, by £1,800,000, the computation of the Committee, which had taken into its consideration the finances of the kingdom, while, by the beneficial operation of the sinking fund, fifty-two millions of the national debt had been liquidated, and the fund itself increased to five millions. Mr. Pitt concluded his statement with these consolatory reflections, of which his own wise system of policy had supplied the basis.

“ We find, therefore, that, notwithstanding the burdens of this war, more than one-half of the debt contracted by our ancestors at one time has been completely paid off. We find that the amount of our permanent revenue is greater than it has ever been in any former years either of peace or war; and, what is still more deserving of your consideration, that, during the whole course of this war, which some gentlemen have thought proper to call disastrous and ruinous, this maritime nation,



exposed as she has been, to such numberless difficulties, to the hostility of so many powers, and obliged to maintain an immense naval and military force, has every year been increasing in resources. We have increased our external and internal commerce to a greater pitch than ever; and we may look to the present as the proudest year that has ever yet occurred for this country. The manufactures exported from this country amount, in one year, according to the latest estimate, to the value of twenty-four millions, and the amount of foreign produce that has been exported is no less than seventeen millions. If, therefore, we compare this year of war with former years of peace, we shall, in the produce of our revenue, and in the extent of our commerce, behold a spectacle at once paradoxical, inexplicable, and astonishing: we shall see that, in spite of the alarm and agitation which have often prevailed in the course of this arduous contest, in spite of the difficulties occasioned by the strange conduct of foreign nations, in spite of the despondency which has occasionally prevailed, we have still been adding to our resources, and increasing the means of continuing a war that was undertaken, and carried on, for the maintenance of our honour, our independence, and safety; for the defence of all that was dear to



the civilized world, and for the existence of a constitution eminently adapted to all the purposes of public liberty and of private happiness. Amidst all the dangers that surround us, and the difficulties with which we may be embarrassed, we have still the consolation to think, that we can look up with confidence to the power and resources of the country; that we have the ability to meet, and to defeat, all the schemes and combinations, which our enemies may practise or raise up against us. From this animating prospect we can look back, with heart-felt satisfaction, to what we have done; we can say to the world, that we have discharged a most difficult duty; that, under all circumstances, we have maintained our consistency and our independence; and, in short, Sir, that we have done every thing, which was at once calculated to preserve the rights of a just and benevolent Sovereign, under whose reign the people have enjoyed such unexampled happiness,—every thing that could tend to exalt the character of a great and wise legislature, and preserve the liberties of a brave and loyal people.”

The resolutions proposed by Mr. Pitt were carried; and bills were soon after brought in; and, after various discussions, and the introduction of some modifications of particular taxes, passed into laws. On a subsequent day, Mr. Pitt's successor proposed a repeal of the



tax on printed calicoes, and of part of the new duty on paper, amounting, in the whole, to £232,000; and an additional duty on stamps, and playing cards and dice, was adopted as a substitute.

Mr. Pitt having resigned his official situation on the 14th of March, the new Ministry was announced to the public. It consisted of Mr. Addington, First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Duke of Portland, President of the Council; Lord Eldon, Chancellor; Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Privy Seal; Earl St. Vincent, First Lord of the Admiralty; Earl of Chatham, Master-General of the Ordnance; Lord Pelham, Secretary of State for the Home Department; Lord Hawkesbury, Secretary for the Foreign Department; Lord Hobart, Secretary for the Department of War and the Colonies; Lord Lewisham, (succeeded by Lord Castlereagh) President of the Board of Controul; Right Hon. Charles Yorke, Secretary at War; Earl of Liverpool, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; Right Hon. Dudley Ryder, (now Lord Harrowby) Treasurer of the Navy; Right Hon. Thomas Steele, and Lord Glenbervie, Joint Paymasters of the Forces; Lord Auckland and Lord Charles Spencer, Joint Postmasters-General; John Hiley Addington and Nicholas Vansittart, Esqs. Se-



cretaries of the Treasury; Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls; Sir Edward Law, (now Lord Ellenborough) Attorney-General; Honourable Spencer Perceval, Solicitor-General; Earl of Hardwicke, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; Earl of Clare, Lord Chancellor; Lord Castlereagh, (succeeded by Mr. Wickham) Chief Secretary; and The Right Hon. Isaac Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

This Ministry contained, as will be seen, several Members of the late Administration; many men of solid and useful, though none of brilliant and first rate, talents; men, however, who possessed still more essential qualifications for office than splendid abilities,—*sound principles*; a rooted attachment to the Established Church, and, as might be supposed, by their acceptance of office under such circumstances, a fixed determination to defend its interests, against all speculative schemes, and innovating projects. But it is customary to consider the talents and knowledge of the Prime Minister, as the criterion, by which the merits of a whole Administration are to be judged. Without admitting the justice of this criterion, it may not be amiss to observe, that Mr. Addington's principles and talents had been highly praised by those who were deemed most competent to speak of them with decision; by Mr. Pitt and



Lord Grenville, both of whom stated their determination to support him and his colleagues, from a conviction that they would strictly pursue the same manly, firm, and steady policy which had been followed by their predecessors. It is still possible, that both these statesmen may have been led to overrate the abilities of the new Premier, by their respect for his principles; and by not duly considering the difference between the qualifications which are necessary for an efficient speaker of the House of Commons, and those which are requisite to form an able Prime Minister. He was, however, entitled to credit for his ready obedience to the commands of his Sovereign, by which alone he was induced to accept this arduous situation,—a situation from which an ordinary mind would have shrunk, immediately after it had been filled by Mr. Pitt.

The first information which Mr. Addington received of the approaching change was from his Sovereign, who, having commanded his attendance at Buckingham House, apprized him of the difference between him and his Ministers, and of his resolution never to assent to the measure which they wished to carry.—His Majesty, at the same time, desired him to think of forming a new Ministry, of which he was to be the head. Mr. Addington immedi-



ately communicated this information to Mr. Pitt, and earnestly pressed him to forego a design, which could not fail, if persisted in, to be productive of the most injurious consequences to the country, in the present critical situation of public affairs. No conduct could be more honourable, or more praiseworthy, than this.

It is highly probable, that Mr. Pitt was consulted by the King on the composition of the new Ministry, which contained so many of his friends, and the principal members of which stood, in a manner, pledged to be guided by his principles of policy. The Opposition, however, delighted, as they were, with the resignation of the Cabinet, appeared greatly displeased at finding the possibility of forming a new Ministry without having recourse to them. It was, no doubt, considered by them as a great act of presumption in the King; and they expressed their displeasure, in both Houses, in terms so gross as to betray the source from which they sprang. They chose to take the incapacity of the new Ministers for granted, and resolutely condemned them without a trial. There was only one of them whom the Whigs of Opposition condescended to praise, because he was a professed Whig himself, and a member of certain clubs at which orators are fond of



displaying their factious eloquence; and though they were joined in their commendations, by Mr. Pitt himself, it is certain, and experience has proved the fact, that either for talents or principles he was less entitled to praise than any member of the new Cabinet; and, in truth, the commendable qualities, or qualifications, which he possesses, still remain to be discovered, a fit subject for the exercise of speculative research. A candid appeal to the justice of the public, desiring to be judged by their actions, was ill-calculated to obtain an impartial hearing at a Whig Tribunal; and the Opposition, accordingly, dismissed the appeal, and rejected the suit.

Speculation and curiosity were now afloat to ascertain the true cause of the late resignations. Even Lord Grenville's explanation did not satisfy the public. And, in order to bring the matter into discussion, to cast censure on the old Ministers, and to embarrass the new, Mr. Grey, on the 25th of March, moved for an inquiry into the state of the nation. In the speech which introduced his motion, Mr. Grey took a view of the whole conduct of Mr. Pitt's Administration, from the commencement of the French Revolution to the present moment; he found in it every thing to condemn, and nothing to commend. To those who composed it he imputed all



the misfortunes which overwhelmed Europe; all was, on their side, disaster and disgrace; while the mighty genius who governed France, trusting to the resources of his own mind, restored life and energy to the government, led on his armies to victory, and laid his enemies at his mercy. Most of the enemies of Great Britain drew forth his commendations, and he particularly eulogized the confederated powers of the North. He censured the late Ministers for resigning their places; talked of an engagement which they had contracted with the Catholics of Ireland; and arraigned them for entering into it without the knowledge of the Crown.—Mr. Whitbread seconded his motion, and Mr. Dundas confuted his assertions. As a strong proof of that unvaried disgrace, which Mr. Grey had attached to the British arms, during the whole progress of the war, Mr. Dundas produced a list of conquests, beginning with the capture of Tobago, in 1793, and ending with the reduction of Malta, in 1800.—And, in farther illustration of the disastrous policy of Ministers, he exhibited a list of ships taken or destroyed since the commencement of the contest. It contained 78 ships of the line, 181 frigates, and 234 smaller vessels, making a total of 483 ships of war, besides 743 French privateers, 15 Dutch, and 76 Spanish, in all



834, which, added to the ships of war, formed 1317 vessels equipped for warlike purposes. In the East and West, our successes had been complete and important. Our trade to the Colonies, conquered from our enemies, was most extensive; and our general commerce had flourished and increased beyond example. Mr. Dundas proved, from a comparison of the conquests effected, and ships taken, in the seven years war, conducted by the late Lord Chatham, with the same objects in the present war, that the latter had been successful beyond any other. "With this result before him," said he, "the Minister, who, for so many years, had guided the councils of this country, and had superintended the conduct and operations of the war, need not be afraid to transmit his fame to posterity, as a companion to that of his illustrious father."

There were two striking points of difference in the two wars to which Mr. Dundas had adverted, which rendered the comparison in favour of the last infinitely more strong. Mr. Pitt had difficulties to surmount, which his father never had to contend with; namely, the revolutionary power of France, which, while it gave an unnatural vigour to the exertions of the enemy, had a tendency to palsy our energies, and to cramp our efforts at home;



the total disregard of all principles of public faith, as existing between nation and nation, which enabled the Republican government to direct their attacks to quarters where they were least expected, and, consequently, to multiply the points of resistance; and, lastly, the different state of parties in England. During Lord Chatham's administration, a suspension of animosities took place; party feelings and party animosities were not less acrimonious, in reality, than they were at present; but the conduct of parties was widely different; the country was then supposed to be in imminent danger; and men of every description felt themselves bound to unite for the purpose of saving it. During the present contest, a spirit of a very opposite tendency had been woefully displayed. The necessity and justice of the war had been reviled. The necessary evils of war had been exaggerated by every expression calculated to inflame the minds of the people; and in so far as it was possible for our enemies to derive comfort and consolation from the representations conveyed to them, they had been cherished and encouraged in the conflict.

In answer to Mr. Grey's observations on the change of Ministers, Mr. Dundas denied that there was any mystery in the transaction, as had been asserted; and affirmed that those



who resigned on account of a serious difference of opinion, must have incurred the most severe and merited censure, had they acted otherwise; but they retired in no disgust, nor in any spirit of faction. They perceived, with heartfelt satisfaction, that the talents, the character, and the virtues, of their successors had intitled them to the confidence of their Sovereign; and he could only prove the sincerity of this feeling, by declaring his determination to give them his decided support in whatever way it could be useful.

Mr. Pitt confirmed this statement, and avowed the same sentiments. In speaking of the measure which had induced him to quit his situation, he said, that he did believe the importance of it, and the circumstances by which it was attended, to be such, that, while he remained in office, he should have been unable to bring it forward in the way which was likely to be eventually successful; and, therefore, he judged that he should serve the public less beneficially, as well as the parties who were more immediately the objects of it, in making the attempt, than in desisting from the measure. His idea of the measure itself was, that it was one which, upon the whole, had better been adopted than refused, under all the circumstances; such was, also, the idea of those who



had acted with him, and they had, therefore, thought it better that they should quit their offices than continue, under such circumstances, in his Majesty's service. In doing this, they had acted purely from principle; they had acted in such a manner as to satisfy their own minds, which was to them important; and he hoped they had acted in such a manner as would, one day or other, be perfectly satisfactory to the public, so far as the public should ever think it worth their while to be concerned in his conduct.

Adverting to the measure itself, had he proposed it, as at one time he wished, it was not one which the Opposition were likely to look on lightly, although he should have had the good fortune to have their support if he had brought it forward, that is, in one part of it; but he did not think that they would have approved of the whole of it; nor did he believe that they would have favoured the whole of the principle on which he should have proposed the measure. He declared, he was not anxious to have the question agitated at all, at that moment. He did not think that that was a period, in which it could be agitated beneficially to the public, or to the Papists themselves; but, whenever it should be agitated, he should be ready and willing to go fully into it, and to give his opinion at large



upon it. He would only say, at present, that as to any thing which he, and his colleagues, had it in contemplation to bring forward, he disclaimed the very words in common use,—“the emancipation of the Catholics,” or “Catholic emancipation.” He had never so understood the subject; he never understood the situation of the Catholics to be such; he did not then understand it to be such, as that any relief from it could be correctly so described; but he thought the few remaining benefits, of which they had not yet participated, might have been added safely to the many benefits which had been so bounteously conferred on them, in the course of the present reign. He had been of opinion, and he still was of opinion, that those benefits, if they had preceded the Union, would have been rash and destructive. He had been of opinion then, he was of opinion now, that the very measure to which he alluded, as a claim of right, could not be maintained; and it was on the ground of liberality alone, and political expediency, that he should have thought it desirable, advisable, and important; but he would not have had it founded on a naked proposition, to repeal any one thing, which former policy had deemed expedient for the safety of the Church and State. No, it was a comprehensive, and an extensive system, which he meant to propose; to relinquish things



certainly intended once as a security, which he thought, in some respects, ineffectual, and which were liable to additional objections, from the very circumstance of the object of the Union having been accomplished, and providing other security for the same objects, to have a more consistent and rational security, both in Church and State, according to the principle, but varying the mode, which the wisdom of our ancestors had adopted for the prevention of danger. The measure he intended to propose, he thought, would give more safety to the Church and State, as well as more satisfaction to all classes, and all descriptions, of the King's subjects, to take away that which no man would wish to remain, provided there could be perfect security without it.

Without that knowledge, which I have not found attainable, it is impossible to enter upon an argument, in order to prove the fallacy of Mr. Pitt's opinion upon this subject. But it may be permitted, in the absence of that knowledge, to express a strong doubt, that any measure which could be proposed, could give more safety to the Church and State, than the existing laws were calculated to ensure. And as to the removal of one test, merely to substitute another, (and it was certainly the intention of Mr. Pitt to adopt *some* test, in lieu of that



which he meant to remove, or all the promised security would have been nugatory and illusive) it does not appear to be an object in which the hopes or wishes of the public could be much interested. The existing test was not confined to Papists and Dissenters, it extended alike to all the members of the Established Church; and none of these had expressed a wish for its removal; consequently, its removal could afford no *satisfaction* to *them*. They were, indeed, perfectly satisfied with it as it stood; they wanted no change;—they did not wish to lose a certain benefit in the hope of gaining an uncertain advantage; to exchange one security which had the test of experience in its favour, for another which, however fair in speculation, was yet untried.

Although Mr. Pitt, from a laudable desire to prevent any false impressions on the public mind, had entered into this spontaneous explanation of his late conduct, he felt the necessity of denying the right of the House of Commons to require of any man to state his reasons for tendering his resignation to his Sovereign; nor, he observed, was it a common thing for the public to require it. A man very often, indeed, made his appeal to the public on going out of office, and that, sometimes, as much with a wish to be reinstated as any thing; but he never heard of a man being called to exculpate



himself from the charge of resigning. But it had been said that, by their silence on the subject of the Catholic question, the late Ministers brought the name of their Sovereign into disrepute; and Mr. Grey had chosen to put a construction of his own on that silence, and then to ask a question, whether the Catholics had, or had not, been deceived? And, in reference to some paper, had said, that *innumerable* obstacles were in the way of the measure. Mr. Pitt expressed his belief, that the word was *insuperable*; though he could not be responsible for the verbal accuracy of any paper whatever. "Upon that subject," added Mr. Pitt, "all I will say is this, that, although I wished to submit the question of the Catholics to Parliament, there were such objections sttaed as made me feel it impossible, with propriety, to bring the measure forward as a Minister. These are the general words I choose to use upon the subject: the honourable gentleman shall draw from me no admissions, and no denials, on this transaction."

Recurring to the observation of Mr. Grey, respecting the name of the Sovereign being brought in question by the conduct of his Ministers, Mr. Pitt said that the Opposition appeared to be angry because he would not tell them whether they ought to be angry or not. They wondered why he did not *make* it a matter



of question, and they put distinctly some points in the way of question; but he would not answer interrogatories. He would, however, tell these gentlemen, that, on this subject, they deceived themselves grossly. Should they be able to establish, that the opinion of the Sovereign made it impossible to bring the subject forward, they would gain nothing by it; for, let the opinion of the Sovereign be what it might, or the opinion of his servants what it might, of the Sovereign to dispense with their services, or of the servant to tender his resignation, it would still remain the same. If the Opposition should but once succeed in shaking this principle, they would do more than they would be willing to avow towards the destruction of the Monarchy; they would establish the most extravagant part of an oligarchy that ever was erected in any State; for then, neither the Sovereign could dismiss, nor the subject resign, without an explanation being made to the public. So that the Sovereign, the father of his people, could never part from his servants, unless he condescended to shew they gave him bad advice; nor his servants tender their resignation, unless they could prove that something was attempted to be imposed upon them which they could not, in their consciences, approve. Was this, Mr. Pitt asked, the state, or was it desirable that it should be the state, of the Monarchy, in this



country? Certainly it was not. The use of the name of the Sovereign, for the purpose of influencing opinions in that House, or in any deliberative assembly, was justly deemed unconstitutional. The Sovereign exercised his opinion on the sentiments, as well as on the capacity, of his Ministers; and if, upon either, he judged them to be incompetent, or, in any degree, unfit, it was the prerogative, and, with perfect loyalty, let him add, also, the duty, of the Crown to dismiss such Ministers. He must also be allowed to say, that, if a Minister felt that, from a sense which he entertained of his duty, he ought to propose a measure, but was convinced that his endeavours must be ineffectual, so that his services must be limited to a narrower compass than he could desire, and that success, in some material points, was impossible, he ought to be permitted to retire; but, in proportion to the difficulty which the Sovereign might have in accepting the resignation of such a Minister, ought to be his love for such a Sovereign. Mr. Pitt hoped that he was not deficient in his duty to the best of Sovereigns; and he hoped the whole ground and motive of his actions would continue to be justified during the whole of his reign. “This is all I shall say upon this subject, and it may, perhaps, be saying more than I ought.”

With respect, however, to the assurances



said, or supposed, to be held out to the Catholics of Ireland, Mr. Pitt deemed it proper to add a few words. The paper, circulated in that part of his Majesty's dominions, to which Mr. Grey had alluded, was a memorandum, sent in the name of the Marquis Cornwallis.\* But, as this matter materially affects the public character and conduct of Mr. Pitt, at the most critical period of his political life, it will be the fairest, and the surest, mode of preventing misconception, to deliver his sentiments in his own words.—

\* The paper, or rather papers, (for there were two of them) to which Mr. Pitt here referred, were as follow :

“ The leading part of his Majesty's Ministers, finding insurmountable obstacles to the bringing forward measures of concession to the Catholic body whilst in office, have felt it impossible to continue in administration under the inability to propose it with the circumstances necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages ; and they have retired from his Majesty's service, considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success ; the Catholic body will, therefore, see how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause by good conduct ; in the meantime, they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who may espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they may look to from any other quarter ; they may, with confidence, rely on the support of all those who retire, *and of many who remain in office*, when it can be given with a prospect of success. They may be assured that Mr. PITT *will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour, and prepare the way for their finally attaining their objects ;* and the Catholics will feel that, as Mr. Pitt could not concur



“ I know it to be true,” he continued, “ that the noble Lord did feel it right, as a matter of public duty, to make a communication to persons most immediately among the Catholics, and to state the motives which led to the late change

in a hopeless attempt to force it now, he must, at all times, repress, with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body.

“ Under these circumstances it cannot be doubted, that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful, and patient, line of conduct ; that they will not suffer themselves to be led into measures, which can, by any construction, give a handle to the opposers of their wishes, either to misinterpret their principles, or to raise an argument for resisting their claims ; but that, by their prudent and exemplary demeanour, they will afford additional grounds to the growing number of their advocates, to enforce their claims, on proper occasions, until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained.

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“ *The sentiments of a sincere friend, (the Marquis Cornwallis) to the Catholic claims.*

“ If the Catholics should now proceed to violence, or entertain any ideas of obtaining their objects by convulsive measures, or forming associations with men of jacobinical principles, they must, of course, lose the support and aid of those who have sacrificed their own situations in their cause, but who would, at the same time, feel it to be their indispensable duty to oppose every thing tending to confusion.

“ On the other hand, should the Catholics be sensible of the benefits they possess, by having so many characters of eminence *pledged not to embark in the service of government, except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained*, it is to be hoped that, in balancing the advantages and disadvantages of their situation, they would prefer a quiet and peaceable demeanour to any line of conduct of an opposite description.”



which took place in his Majesty's Councils, in order to prevent any misrepresentation of that subject from then adding to the *danger of the public tranquillity*. I beg to state that matter clearly and distinctly; it was my express desire, not conveyed by myself, but through a noble friend of mine sitting near me, (Lord Castlereagh) that the noble Lord should take an opportunity of doing this. I do not arrogate any merit for it, but I think it is an answer to any charge against us upon this subject for remissness, that we lost no time in making that representation and explanation of our motives; and the principle of it was this, that the attempt to realize our wishes at this time would only be productive of public embarrassment. The representation was therefore made; but, with respect to the particular paper delivered, it was not previously consulted with me how it should be worded; and, therefore, for the particular phrases of it I do not hold myself responsible. All the knowledge I derived or conveyed was founded on verbal interpretation. As to the tenour of the paper I have alluded to, the sentiments in it are conformable to those which I have already expressed in this House, and shall again express, whenever I have occasion to deliver my sentiments on that subject; and it is fit, not only that this House should know them, but also that the community at large should know



them. I mean this, that a measure of that sort appeared to me to be of much importance under all the circumstances; and that, being unable to bring it forward as a measure of government, I thought I could not, therefore, in honour, remain in the situation in which I then stood; and that I was desirous of letting it also be understood, that, whenever, the objection I alluded to did not exist, the same obstacle did not interpose, every thing depending on me, as well as those who thought with me, I should do, for that I was desirous of carrying that measure, thinking it of great importance to the public at large; but that, in the mean time, if any attempt to press it, so as to endanger the public tranquillity, should be made, or any attempt to pervert the affection of any part of his Majesty's subjects, we should take our full share in resisting such attempts, and we should do so with firmness and resolution. These are the sentiments which I expressed, and I did hope that the day would come, when, on the part of the Catholics, should such a measure be revived, it would be carried in the only way in which I wished to see it carried, which was certainly conformable to the general tranquillity of the empire. As to any other pledge, I beg leave to give none—I have engaged myself to give none—I will give none either now or at any time. I have contributed, as far as peaceable endea-



vours could go, according to my judgment, in the best manner I could at the moment, for the general interests of the country.\*

Mr. Pitt having thus fully explained his own motives and sentiments, on this important transaction, answered a question relating to his colleagues,—Whether any of those who had retired from office, had so pledged themselves to the Catholics as to be under the necessity of resigning their offices because they could not redeem their pledge? On this subject he said,—“I beg leave to deny that; and, what is more satisfactory, I believe I am authorized in denying that the Catholics conceived themselves to have received any such pledge.”

After this candid explanation of his conduct, it is impossible to doubt, for a moment, that the *Catholic Question* was the ground of difference between the King and his Ministers, and the immediate cause of their resignation; it would be clear also from hence, if there were no other proof of the fact, that no pledge whatever was given by Mr. Pitt, or by any of his colleagues, to the Irish Papists. But the papers, circulated by Lord Cornwallis in Ireland, call for some observation, though, as Mr. Pitt confined his approbation of them to the *tenour*, and disclaimed all share in the wording them, it is difficult to say how

\* Mr. Pitt's Speech, on March 25th, 1801, as published in the collection of all his speeches. Vol. IV. P. 188. 191.



far these observations may be applicable to his conduct. In the first place, these papers bear the semblance of an appeal from the Throne to the people;—a measure which Mr. Pitt expressly reprobated and disclaimed; though, indeed, it has been said, that they were intended only to be communicated to the Prelates, and leading persons of the Romish Church, and not to be published.\* But this precaution, if given, was totally disregarded; and one instance was added to many others, which might be adduced, of the little reliance to be placed on the delicacy or forbearance of Papists, on any subject in which their religious prejudices are nearly, or remotely, concerned.† In the next place, what necessity could there be for the King's confidential Ministers to justify their conduct to the *Irish Papists*, on a subject on which they had differed from their Sovereign, which, as they stated themselves, was “*of great importance to the empire at large* ;” and, in regard to which, therefore, if any explanation were necessary, it was at least as much due to the Protestant majority, as to the Catholic minority, of his Majesty's subjects. And lastly, in almost every sentence of these papers, there is an evident dread displayed

\* See Rivington's Annual Register for 1801. P. 76.

† The publication of Lord Redesdale's Letter to Lord Fingal, exhibits another memorable proof of the justice of this remark.



of some public commotions on the part of these very Papists, whose good conduct, and peaceable demeanour, had been stated as one of the conditions on which alone it would be proper or expedient to admit them to a full participation of political power. Exhortations to loyalty are evidently insulting to *loyal* men; and dissuasives from *turbulence* and *rebellion* can never be necessary to *quiet, orderly, and well-disposed* subjects. It would appear, then, from these papers, that the Ministers had been persuaded that, if their claims were not granted, the Papists would renew those horrible scenes which had so lately spread desolation over the Southern provinces of Ireland. It is a melancholy fact, that the Irish Papists, during the long period of seventy years, while all the penal laws were in force against them, were perfectly quiet and tranquil, but the moment the system of concession began to be adopted, they became clamorous and discontented; and, in proportion as indulgences have been lavished upon them, their clamours have increased; their supplications have become claims, and favours have been converted into rights. Be it remembered, however, that Mr. Pitt, though inconsiderately betrayed into an admission of the *expediency* of granting the few concessions which still remained to be granted,



expressly denied the existence of any *right*, on their part, to claim such concessions.

But there is one part of the last of the two papers circulated in Ireland, which requires particular attention. It is there stated, in allusion to the Ministers who had resigned their places, that they were “*pledged not to embark in the service of government, except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being to be obtained.*” Here, then, was a *specific pledge*, not indeed, of the nature disclaimed by Mr. Pitt, that is, a pledge, given to the Irish Papists, as an inducement to assent to the measure of the Union, that Ministers would bring forward the question of *their privileges*; but a pledge of a still more serious, and a more alarming, nature,—a pledge to disregard any call which their Sovereign might make upon them, at any future time, for their public services, unless they could prescribe to him a condition which, they knew, was incompatible with his sense of duty, and repugnant to his conscience. In fact, it is difficult to reconcile such a pledge with the duty which a subject owes to his Sovereign; it looks, indeed, very like an aristocratic confederacy formed against the Crown. And it is much to be questioned, whether any other Viceroy, than the pliant nobleman who then filled that station, could have been found to give the sanction of his



authority to a paper containing a passage so radically objectionable, in every point of view. It must be remarked, however, that Mr. Pitt, in all his explanations on the subject, limits his reference to a *single paper*; and when this circumstance is coupled with his subsequent conduct, in embarking in the service of government without any such terms as the pledge in question prescribed, it is fairly to be inferred, that he was no party to the pledge, and that it had neither his consent nor his approbation. The pledge was inconsistent with that duty and affection which he ever professed for his Sovereign; and if it were not absolutely *unconstitutional*, it differed very essentially from the customary modes of proceeding, in such cases; since there is a wide distinction between dissenting from a measure proposed to be adopted, of which a Minister disapproves, and for which he is responsible; and insisting on the adoption of a measure which the Sovereign disapproves. The one is an act to be *committed*, which may affect the Minister's character and safety; the other an *omission*, which can be productive of no such consequences. Besides, as far as an inference could be drawn from experience, in respect of the act prescribed in this instance, it was against the measure.



The papers, however, in question, admitting that they originated in the purest and most honourable intentions, (and independent of the pledge just noticed) could not be justified on the ground either of propriety or of duty. They, in a manner, identified Mr. Pitt and his colleagues with the Catholic party in Ireland, to the utter neglect of the loyal Protestants of that country, who, possessing thirty-nine fortieths of the property, and constituting, at least, one-third of the population, were most deeply interested in the question. Nor was this irregular proceeding consistent with that respect for the King which Mr. Pitt always professed, and always felt, and from which no consideration could have induced him *intentionally* to depart. The Ministers owed an account of their conduct, in the resignation of their offices, to their Sovereign alone; but, if they chose to enter into any explanation of their motives or views, it ought to have been directed to the nation at large, and not to any particular description of subjects, much less to that body, whose cause they considered themselves as having espoused in opposition to the King.

Though it be certain that this question was the efficient cause of Mr. Pitt's resignation, yet it is highly probable that there were other considerations floating in his mind at the time,



which might have some influence in deciding his conduct. There is reason for believing that he differed from some of his colleagues on the important subject of peace; and, indeed, it may be inferred, from the part which he afterwards took in the discussions on the peace of Amiens, that he was disposed to make more sacrifices for the attainment of peace than other members of the Cabinet would have been inclined to accede to; and had a schism prevailed in the Cabinet on such a question, Mr. Pitt might possibly have been left in a minority. There were various other points, too, of less importance, which combined to fix his determination to resign. But, whether one or all of these considerations influenced his resignation, it is certain that, in the adoption of that measure, he acted, as he did upon every other occasion, most conscientiously. Had he listened, indeed, to the dictates of that honest ambition which made him aspire to power, only for the sake of rendering his country service; had he even been influenced by that chastened love of fame which sought for gratification only in the prosperity of his native land; had he suffered the voice of self-interest, which so often makes the balance preponderate, when doubt keeps it in suspense, to bias his conduct, he would have retained the reins of power, which he had so long, and



so successfully, guided. His resignation damped all his hopes and all his prospects; it left the great object of his public life unaccomplished, his financial schemes incomplete. After he had been Prime Minister of Great Britain for the long term of seventeen years, he retired from office, much poorer than he entered it;—he retired with embarrassed circumstances, and impaired health. But his embarrassments proceeded not from extravagance, nor his indisposition from dissipation. With the affairs of the nation entrusted to his care, at one of the most critical periods of our history, his mind was, of necessity, too much engrossed by public business, to attend to domestic concerns; and it is not in the family of a Prime Minister that the most economical regulations are adopted, or that the absence of a master's eye is supplied by the vigilance of servants. When Mr. Pitt left office, he carried with him the esteem of his Sovereign, the affection of his colleagues, and the confidence of the country.

Lord Grenville obtained, on his resignation, in addition to some other sources of emolument during his own life, a pension during that of his lady. Mr. Dundas was soon created a Peer by the title of Viscount Melville, and the East India Company settled on him, by an unanimous vote, an annuity of two thousand



pounds. Lord Loughborough, besides the pension allotted to all Chancellors when they retire, was made Earl of Rosslyn, with a limitation of his title to his nephew. Mr. Pitt's services, however, were no otherwise rewarded upon this occasion, than, by the approving voice of his own conscience, and the honest plaudits of a grateful public. He received neither title nor pension, having no other place, than that of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, of which he had been possessed many years. Neither did Lord Spencer nor Mr. Windham receive any mark of the royal favour.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

Progress of the disputes with the Northern Powers—Embargo laid on all their ships in British harbours—The British Envoys recalled from their courts—Plans of the confederates—Seizure of Hamburg by the Danes—The King of Denmark a tool of Buonaparté—Hanover invaded by Prussia—A British fleet passes the Sound—Battle of Copenhagen—The King of Denmark abandons the Northern Confederacy—Assassination of the Russian Emperor, Paul—Accession of Alexander to the Throne of Russia—Peace with the Northern Powers—A British force lands in Egypt—Military operations in that country—Battle of the 21st of March, 1801—Defeat of the French—Death of Sir Ralph Abercrombie—General Hutchinson succeeds to the command of the army—Reduction of Grand Cairo—Capitulation of Alexandria—Final evacuation of Egypt by the French—News of this event first received at Paris—Negotiations for peace—Preliminaries signed in London—Conditions of the treaty—Lord Cornwallis sent to France—Definitive treaty signed at Amiens—The Peace popular in England—Reflections on the consequences of the war—Failure of its principal objects—The war beneficial, on the whole, to Great Britain—Terms of peace highly favourable to France—Mr. Pitt defends the peace in Parliament—The Opposition approve it—Mr. Windham condemns it—His able delineation



tion of the spirit of the French government—Difference of opinion, on the subject of peace, between Mr. Pitt and his friends, and the Members of the Portland-Party—Probable influence of that difference on Mr. Pitt's resignation—Debates on the peace-establishment—Mr. Pitt contends for the necessity of a powerful and extensive establishment—Mr. Fox defends the propriety of an ordinary establishment—Mr. Whitbread attacks the public character of Mr. Pitt—Is silenced by Mr. Pitt—Sir Francis Burdett makes a similar attack—Mr. Pitt defended by Lord Temple—Memorable speech of Mr. Archdall, on the same side—The Baronet's motion rejected by 246 votes against 39—Mr. John Nicholls moves a vote of thanks to the King for dismissing Ministers, whom his Majesty had *not* dismissed—Amendment moved by Lord Belgrave, converting the proposed vote of censure on the late Ministry into a vote of thanks—Opposed by Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Grey—Supported by Sir Henry Mildmay, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. S. Thornton—Sir Robert Peel's speech in praise of Mr. Pitt—Amendment carried by a great majority—Separate vote of thanks to Mr. Pitt—proposed by Sir Henry Mildmay, carried by 211 votes against 52—Commemoration of Mr. Pitt's Birth—Hostile disposition of Buonaparté—Extension of his power on the continent—He complains of the licentiousness of the British Press—Betrays a gross ignorance of the laws and constitution of England—Judicious answer of Lord Hawkesbury to the complaints of the French Consul—Conciliatory disposition of the British Cabinet—Trial of Peltier for a libel on Buonaparté—Animadversions on certain doctrines advanced on that trial—Insolent conduct of Buonaparté to Lord Whitworth, the British Ambassador—Dispute relating to the restoration of Malta—Aggressive projects of Buonaparté—Lord Whitworth recalled—War declared.



[1801-1802.] Mr. Pitt had now leisure to contemplate the progress, and termination, of those measures which had been adopted for the repression of insults, and the punishment of injuries, either sustained, or dreaded, by the crown of Great Britain. All attempts to accommodate the disputes with the Northern Powers, by negotiation, having failed, recourse was, of necessity, had to the *lex ultima regum*. At the beginning of this year an embargo was laid on all Swedish, Danish, and Russian, ships, in retaliation of the hostile proceedings of the Confederated Powers. The British envoys, at the Northern courts, had instructions to inform the Sovereigns, to whom they were accredited, that the King, their master, would never submit to recognize the new naval principles, which were irreconcilable to those of public law, and which struck at the foundation, and maritime power, of his kingdom.— But no reasons, however cogent, no explanation, however satisfactory, could induce these powers to forego their hostile designs on British commerce, and on British power. And, therefore, preparations were made to send a powerful force into the Baltic, to effect, by arms, what could not be achieved by treaty. In order, however, to omit no possible means of averting the dire necessity of proceeding to extremities, the new Minister



sent Mr. N. Vansittart, as Envoy Extraordinary, to the Court of Denmark; but so little did he find the Danish Cabinet disposed to recede from the hostile resolution which it had adopted, that he very soon withdrew; and, with him, Mr. Drummond, the British Minister in Ordinary, the Consul, and some other Englishmen, left Denmark.

The King of Denmark, indeed, had long made preparations for war, in which he was joined by the King of Prussia, and the plan was laid, by a junction of all the Northern fleets, to overpower the British, so as to effect their utter exclusion, not only from the Baltic, but from the whole trade of the North. This was the second cowardly attempt which these powers had made to injure Great Britain at a time, when, in their estimation, harassed as she was by a long-protracted war, she would be unable to resist a confederacy, which they were disposed to consider as highly formidable. By an outrageous act of injustice, and a flagrant violation of those neutral rights, of which the confederates professed themselves to be the chosen champions, Prince Charles, Landgrave of Hesse, took forcible possession of the independent city of Hamburgh, with 15,000 troops, and immediately compelled the Senate to lay an embargo on English merchan-



dize. By this conduct the Danish Monarch proved himself a servile imitator of Buonaparté, who never scrupled to sacrifice every principle of justice, and to invade the most sacred rights, at the call of interest, or at the suggestion of revenge. The King of Prussia, on his part, resolved to keep his confederated brother in countenance, and, therefore, invaded the independent Electorate of Hanover, the neutrality of which he had solemnly guaranteed, and subjected the country to his own dominion.

During these proceedings, a British armament had assembled at Yarmouth, to the number of fifty-four sail, and having on board several regiments of marines and riflemen. This force sailed on the ninth of March, under the command of Sir Hyde Parker, who had with him Lord Nelson and Admiral Graves. The marines on board were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart. They passed the Sound, with little opposition, on the 29th of March, and anchored at a short distance from Copenhagen. The soundings having been ascertained, and buoys placed, the fleet was divided into two parts; Lord Nelson taking the command of twelve men of war, four frigates, as many sloops, and several bombs and fire-ships, while the remainder of the force continued with the Commander-in-Chief.—As Lord Nelson was to



command the attack, he shifted his flag on board the Elephant.

The Danes had made every possible preparation for resistance; they had thirteen large ships of war, besides a variety of smaller vessels, and some very heavy batteries on the shore. The vessels were stationed with great judgment for the protection of the city; and the Danish officers and men were firmly resolved to defend the place to the last extremity.

On the morning of the second of April the British force was in motion. The intricacy of the navigation was such, (notwithstanding the adoption of every possible precaution to avert its dangers) that some of the ships were grounded, and others were prevented from taking their proper station in the line. These were great disadvantages to the assailants; but they did not prevent the Hero of the Nile from beginning the attack. For three hours the action was supported, with equal resolution, by the contending parties. The Danes had suffered most severely; the greater part of their ships were destroyed; most of them had struck their colours, after a desperate but ineffectual resistance; and the Crown-battery alone remained to do any essential mischief to the British squadron. At this period of the conflict, Lord Nelson retired to his



cabin, and wrote a note, addressed "to the Brothers of Englishmen, the Danes," informing them, that his instructions were to spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but that, if the firing on her part was continued, he must be obliged to burn the floating batteries which he had taken, without having it in his power to save the brave men who had defended them. An English boat was sent, with a flag of truce, to deliver this note to the principal Danish ship, now remaining, whence it was forwarded to the Crown Prince, who had taken an active part, at the batteries on shore, during the whole engagement.

The Crown Prince, in order to ascertain the precise views of the British Admiral, in writing such a note, sent a Danish officer on board his ship, who was informed that, in making such a proposal, he had no other motive, but that which sprung from the wish to prevent any unnecessary effusion of blood; that he would, therefore, consent that hostilities should cease, and the wounded be taken on shore; but the prisoners, in the prizes, he should retain, and dispose of the vessels as he thought proper. Having given this explanation, he requested the officer, Adjutant-General Ludholm, to present his humble duty to his Royal Highness, the Prince of Denmark, and



to assure him, that he should consider this the greatest victory he had ever gained, if it should lead to a happy reconciliation between his own Most Gracious Sovereign, and his Majesty, the King of Denmark.

This message being favourably received, Nelson went on shore, and, being introduced, by the Crown Prince, to the King, whose capital was now exposed to the most imminent danger, he performed the most grateful part of his duty, by obtaining the Danish Monarch's consent to an armistice, which was afterwards followed by a treaty, by which Christian VII. undertook to abandon the hostile confederacy of the North, and to restore the friendly communication between the two countries which had subsisted before that confederacy was formed.

In this action the greater part of the Danish crews were either killed or wounded; the former were estimated by the Danes themselves at eighteen hundred. Seventeen of their vessels were taken, sunk, or destroyed; and all those which were captured were burned by the English, the next day, except the Holstein, which had been then built thirty years. The English lost 254 killed, of whom twenty were officers, including Captains Riou and Mosse and 943 wounded, of whom 48 were officers.



While these operations were carrying on against Denmark, the Northern Confederacy received a still more fatal blow by the death of the Russian Emperor Paul. This unhappy Monarch, whose strange and capricious conduct, during the latter years of his reign, exhibited evident symptoms of a disordered mind, was assassinated, in his palace, on the night of the 23d of March. The conspiracy against his life was formed by some of his principal nobles, and the Zubows were the men who undertook to superintend its final execution. Such was the lamentable fate of a Monarch, who possessed many good natural endowments, and some qualities which, properly cultivated, at an early period of life, when the plastic mind of youth is equally susceptible of good and of bad impressions, might have led to happiness and fame. But his unnatural mother, who had consigned her husband to an untimely grave, shewed no more feeling for the son than she had displayed towards the father. By a miserable policy, the result of bad passions operating on a mind over which religion had little controul, and an ill-directed ambition, she exercised a despotic sway,—equally regardless of her son's happiness, and of the welfare of his future subjects, the haughty Catharine deprived Paul of every advantage which educa-



tion and society could afford, teaching him to be jealous from prudence, and suspicious from fear. Hence arose those strange inconsistencies which so glaringly marked his conduct, at different periods of his short reign. The nature of his power, which made his will law, and exempted him from all constitutional responsibility and controul, leaving no channel of communication open by which the sentiments of the people might be conveyed to the Throne, combined with his violent, unsteady, and capricious disposition, to produce the last tragic scene of his life;—no other means but assassination appearing practicable to remove the abuses which were sanctioned by royal authority, and to induce that total change of policy which was universally acknowledged to be equally necessary for the honour of the crown, and the good of the community.

Paul was succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander, who began his reign, by casting a veil over the death of his father, and by a voluntary pledge to make the laws and the will of his grandmother the guide of his policy, and the rule of his government. He abolished all the innovations which Paul had introduced, to the great disgust of the army, and to the material injury of commerce; and he ordered all the British sailors, who had been imprisoned



by Paul, to be conveyed to the ports in which their ships were stationed.

The British fleet, after the affair of Copenhagen, repaired to Carlsrona, and the admiral called upon the Swedish government to renounce the Northern Confederacy. While the fleet lay here, news was received of the death of Paul, accompanied by proposals to Sir Hyde Parker, for an amicable termination of the disputes between Great Britain and the Northern Powers. Hostilities immediately ceased; Lord St. Helens was, soon after, sent to St. Petersburg, as Minister Plenipotentiary; and, on the 17th of June, a convention was signed by Russia and Great Britain, to which Sweden and Denmark afterwards acceded, by which the principal conditions contended for by Great Britain were clearly established, and such restrictive regulations imposed on the right of search, as should prevent any arbitrary or unwarrantable exercise of that right on neutral ships.

So far the vigorous measures which had been prepared during Mr. Pitt's administration proved fully adequate to the objects which they were designed to accomplish. Measures of a similar nature, however, directed against the enemies of the country, in another quarter of the globe, though ultimately successful, were doomed to



experience a more serious and a more determined opposition. The force which had been assembled, in the preceding year, after the reduction of Malta, had repaired to Gibraltar, to recover from the inconveniences of a long cruise in a boisterous season. In December, 1800, they landed at Malta, whence they sailed, in two divisions, for Marmorice, in the hope and expectation of deriving material assistance from the Turks. They were deceived, however, in this respect; and, indeed, they laboured under such disadvantages, as had seldom been experienced by troops in a similar situation. They knew little or nothing of the country they were going to attack; they were possessed but of one map, and that most grossly incorrect; they had no other guide than Sir Sidney Smith, who was unacquainted with the interior of the country; they could derive no information but from Mr. Baldwin, who had been the British Consul, at Alexandria;—and they were so ill-informed of the actual state of the enemy's force, that, at the highest computation, they estimated it only at 10,000 French, and 5,000 auxiliaries;—and this estimate even exceeded the number stated in the official information sent from England, on which the expedition was founded. In point of fact, the French force, at this time, amounted to no less than



32,180 men;—while Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who commanded the expedition, had under him not more than 12,000 effective men.\*

Notwithstanding the disparity of force, and so many other discouraging circumstances, the British Commander resolved to make the attempt, at least, to dislodge the French from Egypt. Aboukir Bay was the point chosen for landing the army, and, at two o'clock in the morning of the 8th of March, 1801, the first division, consisting of the reserve, under Major-General Moore, the brigade of guards, under Major-General Ludlow, and part of the first brigade, composed of the Royals, the first battalion of the 54th, 200 of the second battalion, the whole amounting to about five thousand five hundred men, under the command of Major-General Coote, assembled in the boats, while the remainder of the first and second brigades were put into ships stationed close to the shore, to be ready to give speedy support to the troops that were to land first.

The boats were appointed to rendezvous near the Mondovi, which was anchored at about gun-shot distance from the shore. At three o'clock, the signal rocket was fired; and the

\* See the official returns of both armies, in Sir Robert Wilson's History of the Expedition.



boats moved onwards to the destined spot. But it was near nine o'clock before they could all collect and proceed, in regular order, to the shore. The right flank of the boats was protected by the *Cruelle* cutter, and the *Dangereuse* and *Janissary* gun-vessels; the left by the *Entreprenant* cutter, *Malta* schooner, and the *Negresse* gun-vessel; on each flank also were two armed launches of the fleet. The gallant hero of *Acra*, with a detachment of seamen, directed to co-operate with the army, had charge of the launches which contained the field artillery. The *Tartan* and *Fury* bomb-vessels were so placed as to cover the landing with their fire; and the *Peterell*, *Camelion*, and *Minorca*, were moored with their broad-sides to the shore.

The shore formed the arch of a circle, the extremities of which, distant about three miles from each other, projected about one mile into the sea. And, as the ships were stationed just within this arch, the boats had a mile to go before they reached the shore. The land rose from the beach, forming a variety of sand-hills, and, in the centre, one much larger than the rest, rising to the height of sixty yards, and nearly perpendicular. It was a position peculiarly favourable for resisting a landing army; and, as the French had had ample notice of the



approach of the army, they had spared no pains to increase its natural advantages, by troops and seamen, placed in situations which gave them the best command of the beach, and exposed themselves to the least possible danger. Indeed, so confident was the French Commander, Menou, that no serious attempt would be made to land here, that he sent only two thousand men to receive the English. This was a fatal blunder of his; for, had he opposed their landing with fifteen or twenty thousand men, as he easily might have done, the enterprize would have been too hazardous to be undertaken, and too desperate to succeed.

About nine in the morning the signal was made for the boats to advance towards the shore. They sprang forward with amazing rapidity, at the same moment; and, as soon as the French had recovered from the astonishment which the intrepidity of the assailants had excited, they opened upon them a most dreadful fire, from twelve pieces of cannon stationed on the heights, and from the Castle of Aboukir, at one end of their line. Such was the quantity of shot and shells thrown from this commanding position, that the destruction of the whole division seemed inevitable; and, as the boats approached the shore, they were further exposed to a heavy fire of grape-shot and



musquetry. The effect of these on the water has been compared, by an eye-witness, to the fall of a shower of hail. Yet, strange to say, only one boat received any material damage.

The reserve leaped out of the boats on the shore, and formed as they advanced; the 23d and 40th rushed up the principal sand-hill, without firing a shot, and drove the enemy from their post with the bayonet. They pursued them till they carried two mole-hills in the rear, which commanded the plain to the left. They were followed by the 42d regiment, who also ascended the height, notwithstanding the fire from two pieces of cannon, and a battalion of infantry;—when they reached the summit, they sustained a charge from two hundred French dragoons, whom they soon compelled to retire with precipitation. These dragoons, however, rallied behind the sand hills, and, attacking the guards, as they were landing on the beach, threw them into momentary confusion; but the timely approach of the 50th regiment, which was already formed on their right, checked the enemy, and gave time for the guards to present a front, when the enemy were again repulsed with considerable loss. At the very moment when the 54th and Royals landed, a column of six hundred infantry was advancing, with fixed bayonets, against the left flank of the guards;



but they no sooner perceived them, than they fired a volley and retreated.

In about an hour and a half the French were driven from every position, with the loss of three hundred men, eight pieces of cannon, and many horses. The boats immediately returned for the remainder of the troops, and, by the great exertions of the navy, the whole army was landed by the evening. In this affair the English had six hundred and fifty-five men, killed, wounded, and missing; of whom 102 only were slain.

The British army continuing to advance, attacked the French, who had taken up a formidable position on the road to Alexandria. This action, which lasted several hours, was fought on the 13th of March. The English suffered severely by the enemy's decided superiority in cavalry and artillery; and, after sustaining a destructive fire, under multiplied disadvantages, during the greater part of the day, the General did not think it prudent to persist in his intention to force the heights on which the enemy were posted; and, therefore, ordered the army to return to the position which they occupied in the morning.

It was in this position that the British army sustained and repelled the memorable attack of the 21st of March. The preceding evening,



Sir Sidney Smith received a letter from an Arab Chief, apprizing him of the arrival of General Menou, at Alexandria, with a powerful force, and of his intention to attack the English the next morning. The Commander in Chief, wholly unacquainted with the disposition and character of these Arabs, gave no credit to the friendly communication, notwithstanding the avowed confidence which the gallant and intelligent officer, to whom it was addressed, and who was best able to appreciate such intelligence, reposed in it. The attack began, on the right of the British lines, at half-past three in the morning, and continued till ten, when Menou, finding every effort to carry the British position unavailing, ordered his men to retire. The loss of the French, on this day, was estimated at four thousand men, about one-fourth of whom were killed. The English had two hundred and thirty-five officers and men killed, twelve hundred and fifty wounded, and two and thirty missing. Among the wounded were General Moore, Brigadier-Generals Hope, Oakes, and Lawson, and Sir Sidney Smith. Sir Ralph Abercrombie also received a mortal wound, by a musquet-ball, in the thigh, early in the day, which he concealed from the army till the period for exertion was past, when his strength failed him, he was carried off the



field, and conveyed on board the Admiral's ship, where he died on the 28th of March. His death was universally, and most deservedly, lamented;—for his mind was stored with every great and good quality, and his heart was the seat of every virtue.

The French General, Roiz, was among the killed.—The Standard of the Legion to which Buonaparté, with his usual arrogance and folly, had given the appellation of *Invincible*, was taken by ANTHONY LUTZ, a private in the Minorca Regiment, which took an active and distinguished part in the business of the day. The action, on the part of the British, was, exclusively, confined to the right wing, which did not consist of more than six thousand men, and which defeated nearly double the number of the enemy, whose whole force, with the exception of eight hundred, was directed against them. On the death of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the command devolved on General Hutchinson.

It was, for some time, a matter of doubt with the new Commander, whether he should lay siege to Alexandria, or proceed further into the country; and, after forming a junction with the Turkish army, which was hastening to join him, by the way of Syria, endeavour to reduce Grand Cairo, and to cut off all communication between



the French on the coast, and every part of the interior. After duly weighing every circumstance, and, particularly, the inadequacy of his force to form the siege of Alexandria, he wisely resolved to adopt the latter plan of operations.

The junction between the English and Turkish armies was effected at the beginning of June; and, on the 15th of that month, General Hutchinson wrote to General Belliard, who commanded at Cairo, calling upon him to prevent a needless effusion of blood, and offering him the most honourable terms to induce him to surrender the place. This the French Commander peremptorily refused, and, in order to inspirit his men at the approach of the English, ordered a *feu de joie* to be fired, by the garrison, *for the capture of Ireland*.\* Belliard, however, had no serious intention of defending the place; he knew the incompetency of his army to guard such extensive fortifications; he was aware, that the inhabitants were, to a man, hostile to the French; and he was sensible that his own troops desired nothing so ardently as to return to Europe. He, therefore, prudently, sent a flag of truce to the English camp, and,

\* Wilson's History of the British Expedition to Egypt, &c. p. 124.



after a long conference, a capitulation was signed, on the 27th of June, by which the French engaged to evacuate Cairo on being allowed to return, with their arms, to Europe. This capitulation was carried into effect on the tenth of the following month, when the English and Turks took possession of the city, and both their flags were hoisted on the citadel. The total amount of persons included in the capitulation amounted to upwards of *fourteen thousand*; exclusive of women and children; and the military alone, including five hundred men who deserted to the Mamelukes, after the capitulation, amounted to fourteen thousand one hundred and seventy-two.\*

General Hutchinson, having received some reinforcements from England, in the month of July, which swelled his army to sixteen thousand men, resolved to commence the siege of Alexandria. The approaches to the town were made under circumstances highly honourable to the valour and good conduct of the besieging army, who drove the enemy from post to post, till the French Commander, Menou, finding no prospect of relief from Europe, and no hopes of ultimate success from further resistance, agreed, on the first day of September, to surrender

\* Wilson's History, &c. p. 173.



the place, on condition of being sent to Europe. The whole force, in Alexandria, at the period of this capitulation, was 10,528 men; the last of which sailed from the harbour on the 18th of September. Thus, with a force apparently so inadequate to the accomplishment of the task which they were sent to perform, did the British army wrest this important country from their enemies, and restore it to their allies.

Intelligence of the final conquest of Egypt by the English reached Paris, before the British Cabinet could be apprized of it, through an inconsiderate permission, granted by General Hutchinson to the French Commander, to dispatch a swift-sailing vessel to apprise his government of the event, the moment the capitulation was signed. It is too much, perhaps, to expect the General, and the politician, to be united in the same person; but, without meaning to impute culpable negligence to the British General, it is impossible not to lament, that he did not take special care, in the critical state in which Europe was then placed, that his own government should be first apprized of an event, of which the interest of their country required that they should receive the earliest possible information. In consequence of the knowledge thus obtained, the First Consul of



France derived an important advantage, in a treaty of peace which he hastily concluded with the Turks, and which contained many provisions highly favourable to the French, who had grossly violated every agreement which they had entered into with the Porte, and who had even invaded her territory in time of peace,—and greatly prejudicial to the English, who, from the important assistance which they had rendered to the Turks, and from their honourable and disinterested conduct towards them, on all occasions, were entitled to every return which justice, generosity, and gratitude, could suggest or confer. The evacuation of Egypt (the Turkish Ambassador not knowing that it had actually taken place) was the consideration held out by the French, for the benefits which they claimed, and the privileges which they acquired, by this new treaty.

It was the more necessary to impart information of this importance to the British Ministers, with all practicable expedition, as they were engaged in a negotiation for peace with the French, and, had the expulsion of the enemy from Egypt been known to them, it is fair to suppose, that they would have insisted upon terms more favourable than those which they actually obtained. The negotiation was carried on in London, between Lord Hawkesbury, on



the one hand, and Louis William Otto, who had been some time resident in this country, as a Commissary for the exchange of prisoners, on the other; the former, by a departure from the established rules of diplomatic etiquette, having consented to reduce himself to a level with a private citizen of France. It had continued in the whole of the summer of 1801; and, in its progress, many impediments arose, and some curious discussions took place, relative to the Liberty of the Press in this country, which the Corsican Consul was fearful might be employed to delineate the hideous features of his own character, in the colours of truth. With every disposition to concede, as far as possible, the British Ministers made a firm stand at this point, and Lord Hawkesbury resisted, strongly and resolutely, every attempt to encroach on that freedom of discussion, to which much of the excellence of the British Constitution may fairly be ascribed. At length, the Cabinet of Paris having received Menou's dispatches from Egypt, hastened the conclusion of the business; and, on the first of October, the preliminaries were signed by Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Otto, and the event was immediately communicated to the public through the accustomed channels. By this treaty Great Britain restored to France and her allies every



possession or colony taken from them during the war, with the exception of the Spanish Island of Trinidad, and the Dutch settlement, at Ceylon. The Cape of Good Hope was to become a free port; and Malta was to be restored to the order, but under the express guarantee and protection of a third power, to be fixed upon in the definitive treaty. In order to bring that treaty to a speedy conclusion, Lord Cornwallis was dispatched to France; Amiens was the scene of negotiation, appointed by the First Consul; and his brother, Joseph Buonaparté, received full power to treat with the British Plenipotentiary. In the course of the discussion which ensued, France, with her usual artifice, started fresh difficulties, and preferred fresh demands; which occasioned so much delay, that it was supposed by many that war would be renewed. On the 25th of March, however, matters were finally arranged, and the seal was put to the treaty of Amiens; which differed but little from the preliminaries of London. Malta was to be garrisoned by Neapolitan troops, till such time as the Knights could form a sufficient force themselves, for the defence of the Island, the independence of which was to be secured by France, Great Britain, Austria, Spain, Russia, and Prussia.



Thus ended the revolutionary war, in the defeat of all the hopes and expectations which had been formed, of indemnity for the past, and of security for the future; and, in the accomplishment of all those gigantic plans of subversion and conquest, which had been conceived by the first founders of the French Republic; and pursued, with unremitting activity, by all her successive rulers. By the peace of Amiens, a great part of the continent of Europe was laid prostrate at the feet of France; and French influence remained predominant from the German ocean to the Bay of Naples. In short, Jacobinism triumphed; her "child and champion" established his ascendancy;—her firmest advocates were honoured and rewarded;—and the stamp of success was given to her boldest projects. Not one of the objects which the Princes originally confederated against France professed to have in view, was attained. On the contrary, her power was extended, her territories were enlarged, her influence was increased, and her principles had surmounted every obstacle opposed to their progress. Her government, it is true, had assumed a new form, less terrific in appearance than the murderous system of Robespierre and his sanguinary associates, but more despotic in reality. A military despotism, formed out of the elements



of Jacobinism, destroyed every vestige of civil liberty, and imposed the most galling and odious fetters on the minds, as well as the persons, of the people.

England, indeed, had escaped the yoke to which the powers of the continent had, in a greater or less degree, submitted. She had secured her constitution and her government from the effects of that revolutionary poison which had destroyed so many ancient institutions, and which had subverted so many Thrones. She had even enlarged her dominions, by the acquisition of an important settlement in Asia, which afforded her the long sought-for advantage of a safe and commodious harbour for her fleets in the Eastern Ocean; and by an island in the West Indies, of consequence more from its relative situation to the Spanish main, than from its produce or probable revenue. She had also kept inviolate her faith with her allies, and had preserved her national character pure amidst surrounding corruption. Here ends the catalogue of her advantages. In every other point she had completely failed. None of the objects which she had pursued in common with the other powers of Europe, had she been able to attain. Her failure, indeed, was not owing to any defect either of wisdom in her councils, or of vigour in her efforts. She had bounteously



opened her treasures to those who fought for the preservation of social order, against revolutionary anarchy ;—she had made every exertion which her undaunted spirit could suggest, and her ample resources command. And, had her allies but displayed equal wisdom, resolution, and vigour, their united efforts must have been crowned with success.

The terms of this treaty were certainly not such as the relative state of the contending parties could justify. If France were mistress of the continent, England was queen of the ocean. If the latter could make no impression on the continental territory of her enemy, she was invulnerable, at all points, by his attacks. She commanded the commerce of the world ; she had taken the principal colonial possessions of France and her vassals, and had wrested from them every resource but what arose from the interior of their respective countries. They could not dispute with her the empire of the sea ; they could not attack any portion of her dominions ; and, with a reduced military establishment, she might have maintained, at a comparatively little expence, which her monopoly of trade would amply supply, a contracted system of naval warfare, which would secure to her the possession of all the advantages which she actually enjoyed, and enable



her to aggravate the distress of her enemies, to destroy their commerce, to diminish their revenue, and to cripple their resources of every kind. Thus circumstanced, she might, and ought to, have commanded much more advantageous terms of peace: in addition to Ceylon and Trinidad, she should have insisted on retaining the Cape of Good Hope, and on the unconditional retention of the Sovereignty of Malta. But the inordinate desire for peace, displayed by the new Ministers, and the weakness of their Plenipotentiary, gave an advantage to the French, in the negotiation, of which they skilfully availed themselves. Hence it was, that, by the treaty of peace, while France was suffered to retain all the conquests which she had made, England submitted to restore every place which she had taken from France. And, by this conduct, the British Cabinet gave a kind of sanction to the monstrous principle of *indivisibility* which the revolutionary legislators of Paris had the audacity to promulgate.

Peace, however, has something so alluring in her aspect, that not only the unthinking multitude, but men of philanthropic feelings, and good intentions, are apt to rush into her embraces, without any previous examination of her principles, and without attention to the mischievous poison which sometimes insidiously



lurks beneath her charms. Thus, the preliminaries were received by the public with every demonstration of unbridled joy; and the reflecting few, who, looking beyond the superficies of things, and feeling, perhaps too acutely, for the honour and dignity of their country, refused to join in the general delirium, experienced the usual marks of popular resentment. The public satisfaction was increased by the conclusion of the definitive treaty, and the people indulged themselves with delusive dreams of permanent tranquillity, and with a confidence of enjoying all the blessings which peace, abstractedly considered, is calculated to afford.

In Parliament, the preliminary treaty was defended by Mr. Pitt, who, though he thought better terms ought to have been obtained, preferred the acceptance of the conditions which had been procured, to a further continuance of the war. In his speech on this subject, (Nov. 8th, 1801) he acknowledged that the restoration of the Monarchy of France would have been more consistent with the wishes of himself and his colleagues, and with the interest and security of the country, than any other state of things; but they had never insisted on such restoration as the *sine quâ non* of peace. The great object of the war was defence for ourselves and for the rest of the world, in a war



waged against most of the nations of Europe, but against us with particular malignity. Security was our great object; there were different means of accomplishing it, with better or worse prospects of success; and, according to the different variations of policy occasioned by a change of circumstances, we still pursued our great object, security.

Mr. Pitt confessed, at the same time, that he gave up his hopes of restoring the ancient Monarchy of France with the greatest reluctance; and he should, to his dying day, lament that there were not, on the part of the other powers of Europe, efforts corresponding to our own, for the accomplishment of that great work; there were periods, during the continuance of the war, in which he had hopes of our being able to put together the scattered fragments of that great and venerable edifice; to restore the exiled nobility of France; to re-establish a government, certainly not free from defects, but built upon sober and regular foundations, in the stead of that mad system of innovation which threatened, and had nearly accomplished, the destruction of Europe.

*Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam  
Auspiciis, et sponte meâ componere curas;  
Urbem Trojanam primum dulcesque mecum  
Reliquias colerem, Priami facta alta manerent,  
Et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.*



This, it was true, had been found unattainable; but we had the satisfaction of knowing, that we had survived the violence of the revolutionary fever, and we had seen the extent of its principles abated,—we had seen jacobinism deprived of its fascination; we had seen it stripped of the name and pretext of liberty; it had shewn itself to be capable only of destroying, not of building, and that it must necessarily end in a military despotism. Mr. Pitt trusted, that this important lesson would not be thrown away upon the world. Disappointed in our hopes of being able to drive France within her ancient limits, and even to raise barriers against her farther incursions, it became necessary, with the change of circumstances to change our objects; for he did not know a more fatal error, than to look only at one object, and obstinately to pursue it, when the hope of accomplishing it no longer remained. If it became impossible for us to obtain the full object of our wishes, wisdom and policy both required that we should endeavour to obtain that which was next best. In saying this, he was not sensible of inconsistency, in his former language or conduct, in refusing to treat with the person who now held the destinies of France; because, when he formerly declined treating with him, he expressly said, that, if events should take the



turn which they had since taken, he should have no objection to treat with him.

Mr. Fox, and his friends, approved the peace, on very different grounds from those on which Mr. Pitt's approbation was founded; thinking the war to be just, holy, and unavoidable, on the part of France, he was of opinion, that the peace ought to be advantageous to her; and, indeed, he did not blush, at one of those public meetings, at which he delivered his sentiments with somewhat less reserve than he displayed in the House of Commons, explicitly to declare, that he approved the peace, *because* it was honourable and glorious to *France!!!*—Happily for Great Britain, this is a solitary instance, in her annals, in which party-spirit has so far subdued every sense of duty, every feeling of patriotism, and every principle of honour, as to make the degradation of his country, and the glory of her enemy, a matter of exultation, and a subject of applause, to a British Statesman!

The peace, however, was strongly condemned by Mr. Windham, who truly represented it as an armed truce, entered upon without necessity, negotiated without wisdom, and concluded without honour. He considered it as productive of no one advantage to the country, but as pregnant with ruin. He drew a



masterly picture of the actual state of France, and ridiculed the idea, that Buonaparté, having established an absolute monarchy, in his own person, would become the most determined enemy of that jacobinism to which he was indebted for the dignity which he enjoyed, and the power which he exercised. Mr. Windham admitted, that Buonaparté, like other demagogues, and *friends of the people*, having deluded and gulled the people sufficiently to make them answer his purpose, would be ready enough to teach them a different lesson, and to forbid the use of that language towards himself, which he had before taught them as perfectly proper towards others. Never was any one, to be sure, who used less management in that respect, or who left all the admirers of the French revolution, within and without, all who admired it as a system of liberty, in a more whimsical and laughable situation. Every opinion for which they had been contending was now completely trodden down, and trampled upon, or held out in France to the greatest possible contempt and derision. The members of Opposition, Mr. Windham remarked, had really great reason to complain of having been so completely left in the lurch. There was not even a decent retreat provided for them. But, though such was the treatment which the



principles of "The Rights of Man," and of the "Holy Duty of Insurrection," met with in France, and on the part of him who should have been their natural protector, it was by no means the same with respect to the encouragement which he might choose to afford them in other countries. Though they used none of these goods in France for home consumption, they had always a large assortment by them, ready for foreign markets. Their jacobin orators were not to be looked for in the clubs at Paris, but in the clubs of London. There they might talk of cashiering Kings, and use other language of a similar import; but should any orator, more flippant than the rest, choose to hold forth in that strain, in the city where the Great Consul resided, in the metropolis of liberty, he would soon put him to silence in the way adopted in the reign of *the Good Woman*. Buonaparté being invested, in virtue of the Rights of Man, with despotic power, could afford to sanction the promulgation of those doctrines in other countries of which he would not suffer the least whisper in his own. While he was at the head of an absolute monarchy in France, he might be the promoter and champion of jacobin insurrection any where else. The object, as well as wicked nature, of jacobinism in England, which, while it



would rebel against the lawful authority of its own government was willing to enslave itself to France, found no difficulty in allowing to him these two opposite characters; and Mr. Windham knew no reason why the House should suppose him disinclined to accept them.

This was a correct delineation of the spirit of the French government, and was well calculated to expose the strange misconception of those who thought, and who maintained, that, because Buonaparté had assumed kingly rank, and regal power, he would not suffer the same means to be used for subverting the thrones of his enemies, as those which he had adopted for the destruction of that of his lawful Sovereign; and for raising his friends, in other countries, to the same eminence which he enjoyed himself, so as to establish his influence beyond the limits of his personal power. To suppose that there was any magical charm in the instrument signed at Amiens, that would make the Consul abandon every principle which he had publicly consecrated, and forego every design which he had secretly cherished; that would produce, in short, a radical change in his mind and conduct, and work a moral and political regeneration, so as to convert a cruel, atrocious assassin, into a mild and virtuous Sovereign, was to admit a supposition which



credulity alone could sanction, and which common sense must reject.

It was remarkable, in these discussions, that the peace was supported by Mr. Pitt, and most of his personal friends, while it was opposed by nearly all the members of the Portland party, who had joined his administration, soon after the commencement of the war.—The head of that party, indeed, the Duke of Portland himself, joined the New Ministry, and concurred with them in their opinions of the peace; while, on the other hand, Lord Grenville, and his family, united with Mr. Windham, and the other opponents of the measure. This circumstance strengthens the belief that Mr. Pitt had the present period in view, when he suffered the Catholic question to induce him to abandon his post.—For, had his administration continued, it is clear, that a serious difference in the Cabinet must have occurred, and it is a matter of doubt whether, on a division, Mr. Pitt would not have been left in a minority. And a consideration of this nature was sufficient to fix his resolution, if, in point of fact, he had any doubts on his mind as to the propriety of his resignation, on the ground of the Catholic claims.

A farther difference occurred, between the several parties, in the House of Commons,



respecting the establishment necessary to be maintained, after the conclusion of peace. By those who considered the peace as nothing more than an *armed truce*, as it was characterized by Mr. Windham; or as a *hollow armed truce*, as it was described by a member of the New Ministry, Mr. Charles Yorke; or even by those who, like Mr. Pitt, were more sanguine in their expectations of its continuance, but who were, at the same time, highly jealous and mistrustful of the French government, contended that the establishment should be unusually large, and, in some degree, commensurate with the danger to which the nation would be exposed. While, on the other hand, those who thought, with Mr. Fox, that the French, when left to themselves, were a harmless, inoffensive people, incapable of injury or injustice to a neighbouring state, and only stimulated to acts of hostility, by wanton and unprovoked aggression, insisted on the propriety and necessity of an *ordinary* peace-establishment. In all these questions, the Ministry, supported by Mr. Pitt, carried with them a decisive majority in Parliament; and had, undoubtedly, the voice of the public on their side.

The part which Mr. Pitt now took, in Parliament, on all public questions, was precisely that which every independent and conscientious



representative of the people ought to take.— He connected himself with no party ; he joined neither the Minister nor the Opposition ; he considered every question, submitted to discussion, on the ground of its own merits, that is, in its tendency to forward the public service, and to promote the public welfare. If he thought a measure conducive to the object which it professed to have in view, and found that object to be laudable, he did not stop to inquire by *whom* it was introduced, but carefully examined its various parts ; and if, after such investigation, he found the measure defective, he honestly endeavoured, by the exertion of his talents and experience, to supply the defects to the best of his judgment ; if it appeared to him wise and good, he gave it his unqualified and cordial support ; and, if he judged it to be radically defective, he opposed it with firmness and decision. Such was the line of conduct which he pursued, with undeviating rectitude, at this new æra of his political life. The Ministers were, on various occasions, indebted to his advice, still more than to his parliamentary vote. And had the Premier continued to pay it that attention which it so richly deserved ; had he not formed a false estimate of his own power, influence, and resources ; had he not imputed to positive desert, that strength which



arose from a combination of fortuitous circumstances, his political career might have been greatly protracted, and Mr. Pitt's last days might have been passed remote from the turmoils of office, and bustle of a court.

On the fifth of April, 1802, when the Minister opened the Budget for the year, Mr. Whitbread embraced the opportunity of attacking Mr. Pitt's system of finance, by expressing his exultation at the supposed desertion of it by his successor, from the circumstance of his having recourse to a loan of twenty-five millions. Mr. Pitt, however, resolved, that no misrepresentation respecting any part of his public conduct, however weakly urged, should pass without an answer, stooped to silence this feeble assailant, whose impotent blows thus recoiled upon himself.

In the following week (April 12th) another attack was made, not merely on the public character of Mr. Pitt, but on his whole system of policy, and on all the measures of his administration, by Sir Francis Burdett, who concluded a long and tedious philippic, in which he enumerated every ground of objection which had been urged, and rejected by the House, for the last twelve years, with a motion for a Committee of Inquiry. He was answered by Lord Temple and Mr. Archdall. The last of these



gentlemen, after delineating, in strong and just colours, the prominent features of Mr. Pitt's administration, and alluding to the generosity manifested to foreigners, added, " Let other nations, when they think of this, tell the honourable Baronet what is now the English character abroad. And let this united nation, when it looks back to the contrast,—on the one hand, their Ministry calling forth the virtues of the country, and placing them in unison with those of the Sovereign;—on the other, a selfish and disaffected party, in their jacobin uniform, of thread-bare sophistry, and patch-work declamation, who once were troublesome, and might have become formidable, in the course of this war of principle, as well as power, had they not been defeated by arguments, as well as by facts, and, at last, driven into obscurity with the indignation of the public;—let this be recollected, and the honourable Baronet have the pleasure, and the pride, to tell what is now the English character at home." Mr. Archdall then pronounced a strong panegyric on the personal character of Mr. Pitt, and having referred, in illustration of his positions, to various parts of his public conduct, he concluded with this pointed remark.—" If, after this, some one should come forward to criminate his merits in the Parliament which



had witnessed them, even he would presume to speak what Mr. Pitt need not condescend to speak for himself;—that to this House it would be enough to say, as his illustrious father said before him, ‘*You know these hands are clean,*’ and to his accuser it would not be too much to say,—

“ Disce, puer, Virtutem ex me, verumque laborem,

“ Fortunam ex aliis — ”

The question was met by a direct negative, which was supported by two hundred and forty-six members, while thirty-nine only countenanced the motion.

Uninstructed by this example, Mr. John Nicholls made a similar attempt on a subsequent day, (the 7th of May) when he moved a vote of thanks to his Majesty for having *removed* the Right Honourable William Pitt from his councils. The awkward construction of this gentleman’s mind appears to have betrayed him into the commission of perpetual blunders.—As on a former occasion, he attempted to support his argument by a precedent which made directly against it, so, on the present, he proposed to thank his Sovereign for an act which he had never performed. The King did not remove Mr. Pitt from his councils, but Mr. Pitt, as has been seen, removed himself. The



issue of this curious motion was such as might have been expected, by any one but the person who moved it. The vote of censure was converted into a vote of approbation; and the motion ended in a generous acknowledgment of the services of him whose good name it was intended to tarnish.

The amendment, in the first instance, was moved by Lord Belgrave, in the following words:—"It is the opinion of this House, that, by the wisdom, energy, and firmness, of his Majesty's councils during the late arduous contest, supported by the unparalleled exertions of our fleets and armies, and by the magnanimity and fortitude of the people, the honour of this country has been upheld, its strength united and consolidated, its credit and commerce maintained and extended, and our invaluable constitution preserved, against the attacks of foreign and domestic enemies." It was not to be supposed that an amendment of this nature would pass without animadversion or resistance, from that party, in the House, who had uniformly opposed all the measures of Mr. Pitt's administration. It was not left to the impotent efforts of the insignificant mover of the original question to oppose it. The whole phalanx of Opposition united on the occasion; Mr. Grey, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Fox,



spoke long, and vehemently, against it. On the other hand, the amendment was strenuously and ably supported by the young nobleman who moved it, by Sir Henry Mildmay, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Samuel Thornton, and Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert, a commercial man himself, bore testimony to the unrivalled knowledge of Mr. Pitt in the commercial concerns of the country. His disinterestedness, he maintained, was as conspicuous as his knowledge, for he had been the benefactor of his country, and had neglected no one's interest but his own. "It has, indeed, been said," pursued Sir Robert, "that, though he did not enrich himself, he secured his influence by bestowing pensions and titles on others. But he had no occasion to have recourse to such arts; he had secured sufficient support by honourable measures; three parts of the House, who were incapable of being bribed, were his friends." Sir Robert was of opinion, that the House ought to bestow on Mr. Pitt some more solid mark of approbation than a vote of thanks; and that it would be a disgrace to the nation to allow such a man to retire to languish in poverty. "I, for one," said the Baronet, "would be happy to contribute to prevent this; not from any personal motives, for I have not the honour of being acquainted with the Right Honourable Gentleman, but on



account of the great and important services which he had rendered his country."

These independent tributes of justice, from opulent individuals, who spoke the real sentiments of their minds, careless whom they might please, or whom offend, could not fail to be highly grateful to the honest patriot, who felt that he deserved them. The amendment was farther supported by his successors in office, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Opposition, was carried by a decisive majority of more than four to one. The same success attended a motion which immediately followed this decision, proposed by Sir Harry Mildmay, for a vote of express and separate thanks to Mr. Pitt;—two hundred and eleven voted for it, and fifty-two against it.

These attacks on the character of Mr. Pitt tended only to call forth a more open display of attachment, on the part of his friends. On the 28th of May, a festival was held at Merchant-Taylors' Hall, in commemoration of his birth.—And it has been truly observed,—“ On no similar occasion was ever witnessed so large a concourse of men, eminent in rank, station, and talent; and never was such a celebration distinguished by so much genuine enthusiasm.”



[1803.] While Mr. Pitt was thus rising in the estimation of his countrymen, the feverish peace, or rather the uncertain truce, which had been concluded at Amiens, was rapidly drawing to a close. It was, indeed, easily perceived, by those intelligent Englishmen, who had recently visited France, that nothing was farther from the wish and disposition of Buonaparté than to maintain a state of real peace and cordial harmony with Great Britain. He never could forgive the noble opposition which she had made to the revolutionary power of France; he considered the freedom of her constitution as a libel on the galling despotism which he had established in his new Empire; and the liberty of her press, through the medium of which the most bitter truths were conveyed to his irritable mind, was a source of constant disquiet, and of incessant complaint, to one whose conscience acknowledged that his crimes set the powers of exaggeration at defiance. In rapid progress he had risen to the summit of supreme power, and a trembling people had recently conferred on him the Consulate for life. But the extent of his authority at home only served to render him more impatient of contradiction abroad; and, as he had succeeded in subduing, by military terror, all opposition in his own territories, he had the presumption to imagine



that he could as easily silence the voice of reproach in foreign countries. The success, indeed, which had attended all his nefarious attempts, in the different states of the Continent, seemed to justify this opinion, all preposterous as, in fact, it was. He had brought his negotiations in Germany, consequent on the peace of Luneville, to a successful termination; and, having rendered Russia and Prussia the simple tools of his power, made his will the law; plundering, at his pleasure, the ecclesiastical Princes of the empire, to indemnify those whose territories he had seized on the French side of the Rhine; and taking special care to reward, most amply, those wretched potentates who had displayed the most cowardly subserviency to his interests, and the most base treachery to their lawful chief. Among these, the petty Sovereigns of Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemburgh, were raised, by him, to the dignity of Electors, as preparatory to their subsequent elevation to the rank of Kings. He had been equally successful in reviving the ancient jealousy between the Prussian Monarch and the Emperor of Germany. The former of these Sovereigns, with a littleness of soul, an imbecility of mind, and a miserable want of foresight, while intent on the humiliation of a rival no longer formidable, and on the pursuit of



petty schemes of personal aggrandizement, enlarged the influence and power of an implacable enemy, and prepared the way for his own destruction! In Italy, also, Buonaparté had assumed the Sovereignty, under the denomination of President, of the Italian Republic, for such was the title now assumed by the Cisalpine Republic. He had united the Kingdom of Sardinia and the Duchy of Parma to France; and he had taken effectual means for rivetting the chains of Switzerland.

Possessed of power so extensive, and inflated by success so unexpected, Buonaparté was little solicitous to afford proofs of a pacific disposition to the only enemy who had resisted his efforts with effect. In fact, the stand which England alone had made against his towering ambition, had severely galled his pride, and increased the inveteracy of his hatred. The idea, that she should presume to question his omnipotence, while the trembling powers of the Continent submitted their necks to his yoke, was intolerable to a mind which acknowledged no honourable principle of action, which was inaccessible to every laudable sentiment, which regarded all competition as an intolerable presumption, and opposition to his will, as an unpardonable crime.

With this disposition the Corsican Consul



betrayed, in all his communications with the British Cabinet, an overbearing and insupportable pride. First to Mr. Otto, and afterwards to his Ambassador, General Andreossi, he sent instructions to complain of the freedom of those animadversions, which the public writers of Great Britain passed on his character and conduct.— And those complaints were reiterated as well by Talleyrand, as by the First Consul himself, to Lord Whitworth, who, in November, 1802, had repaired to Paris as Ambassador to the French Court. In all the communications which took place on this subject, Buonaparté betrayed not only a petulance of temper utterly incompatible with the new character which he had to support, and a profound ignorance of the laws and constitution of this country. He could not be persuaded, that the British Government were unable to exercise, over the press, the same unlimited power, the same boundless tyranny, which he himself exercised over every public writer, throughout his vast dominions. With him it was literally, *Sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione Voluntas*;—his sword enforced obedience to every mandate which his wayward disposition prompted him to issue. It was impossible, then, to make him understand, that, in England, the Ministers were subject to the same legal restraints as the lowest subject of the



realm; that they could proceed only according to the forms of law; and that, if what the law deemed a *libel* should be uttered, or written, against the first potentate in Europe, he must, in order to punish the offender, have recourse to the same modes of proceeding, which are prescribed to Englishmen themselves, under similar circumstances. Reasoning of this kind was lost upon a man who acknowledged no law but his own will, and who daily doomed his subjects to banishment or death, in virtue of his own assumed authority, without trial, and without the observance of any legal form.—Every attempt to procure new laws for imposing additional restraints on the press, having, as might have been anticipated, proved fruitless; and the First Consul remaining unconvinced by the forcible and judicious observations of Lord Hawkesbury,\* a constant state

\* The communication here alluded to is Lord Hawkesbury's letter to Mr. Merry, dated August 28th, 1802. In this his Lordship observes, "I am sure you must be aware that his Majesty cannot, and never will, in consequence of any representation, or any measure, from a foreign power, make any concession which can be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country. This liberty is justly dear to every British subject. The constitution admits of no previous restraints upon publications of every description; but there exist judicatures, wholly independent of the Executive government, capable of taking



of irritation and ill-will continued to prevail between the two countries.

From general complaints, the great Consul descended to *particulars*; and, in the autumn of 1802, he directed his Agent, Otto, to prefer complaints against certain English public writers, and against Peltier, who conducted a Journal, in the French language, entitled, *L'Ambigu*.

cognizance of such publications as the law deems to be criminal, and which *are bound to inflict the punishments* (which) *the delinquents may deserve*; these judicatures may take cognizance, not only of libels against the government and the magistracy of this kingdom, but, *as has been repeatedly experienced*, of publications defamatory of those in whose hands the administration of foreign governments is placed. That our government neither has, nor wants, any other protection than that which the laws of the country afford; and though they are willing, and ready, to give to every foreign government all the protection against offences of this nature, which the principle of their laws and constitution will admit, they never can consent to new-model their laws, or to change their constitution, to gratify the wishes of any foreign power." This language was dignified and becoming the Minister of a British Monarch. But his Lordship was inaccurate, I conceive, in his statement respecting *repeated* prosecutions for libels on foreigners. I recollect but two instances of this kind:—the trial of Lord George Gordon, for a libel on the Queen of France; and that of Vint, for a libel on the Emperor of Russia. Lord Hawkesbury very properly reminded the First Consul, that he might prevent the circulation of any foreign libels in his own country; and that he might have recourse to the laws to punish any writers who might publish libels on him in England.



Although, as Lord Hawkesbury had pertinently observed, in his instructions to Mr. Merry, who was then at Paris, the French press poured forth constant libels against the English government; libels, too, authorised by the French Cabinet; although Rheinhardt, the jacobin representative of Buonaparté, at Hamburgh, had violated the neutrality of the Senate, and had *compelled* them to insert a most virulent attack upon the English government, in the Hamburgh paper; although Buonaparté, himself, had publicly uttered similar libels; and although, to use the words of Lord Hawkesbury, “it might, indeed, with truth, be asserted, that the period which had elapsed since the conclusion of the definitive treaty had been marked with *one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, on the part of the French government* ;\*—so ardent was the desire of the British Ministers to gratify the Corsican, and so averse were they from the adoption of any line of conduct which could have even a tendency to produce a renewal of hostilities between the two countries, that they instructed the Attorney-General to file a criminal information against Peltier, in compliance with the demand of Buonaparté, preferred through the

\* See the declaration of May 18, 1803.



medium of *Otto*.\* The cause was tried before Lord Ellenborough, on the 21st of February, 1803; and, in the course of that trial such principles were advanced, in support of the prosecution, both from the bar and the bench, as, were they to be received as the law of the land, would effectually annihilate the liberty of the press, and impose eternal silence on the historic muse! It was stated as a crime “to bring Napoleone Buonaparté into great hatred and contempt among the liege subjects of our Lord the King.”† If, indeed, this be a crime, I am myself a criminal, for, assuredly, the facts which I have detailed, respecting Napoleone Buonaparté, in the course of this history, have a direct tendency to bring him “into great hatred and contempt among the liege subjects of our Lord the King.”‡ But it is with concern, I observe, that the whole prosecution,

\* See Otto's most impudent letters to Lord Hawkesbury, of July 25th, and August 17th, 1802.

† See the printed trial of Peltier.

‡ If this be really a *crime*, it must be a crime at all times, as well in war, as in peace; besides, the case was argued, on the part of the Crown, as a question not of *policy* but of *principle*, and principle does not vary with times and circumstances. Yet, as the war intervened, the defendant, though convicted, was never brought up for judgment!



was marked by that strong political prejudice, which, wherever it occurs, pollutes the pure current of public justice.\* The defendant was convicted, but the renewal of hostilities was allowed, inconsistently enough, to secure him from punishment! The First Consul was less complaisant; and not one of the numerous libels which appeared in France against the British government was made the subject of prosecution or of punishment. Indeed, they could not well be so made, since they were all published under the express sanction of the First Consul himself.

At the very time when this extraordinary trial was pending, the difference between the two governments was such as to render hostilities unavoidable. At the latter end of February, Lord Whitworth had a personal interview with Buonaparté, in which the latter so far forgot himself, or, rather, so far sunk his assumed, in his *real*, character, as personally to insult the

\* The chief justice remarked, in his charge to the jury, who were a special jury, chiefly of mercantile men; "Gentlemen, I trust your verdict will strengthen the relations by which the interests of this country are connected with France." Such a remark, upon such an occasion, requires no comment to point its tendency, or to characterize its nature. Indeed, the whole of this charge was such as, I trust, will never be repeated in a British court of justice.



British Ambassador, and to threaten his government, in the presence of other diplomatic characters. On this occasion he openly avowed his ambitious designs, clearly developed his views upon Egypt, (which, indeed, had been fully explained in a report previously made by his agent, Sebastiani, who had been sent, in a military capacity, to that country,) boldly justified his unprincipled usurpations in Switzerland, Piedmont, and Italy, and peremptorily insisted on the immediate evacuation of Malta, as the *sine quâ non* of continued peace.

By the treaty of Amiens the King had stipulated to restore, within a given time, the island of Malta to the order of St. John, under the express guarantee of its independence and neutrality by the principal powers of Europe. Circumstances, however, tending to destroy the independence of the order itself, by depriving it of a considerable portion of its revenue, had subsequently arisen, which rendered it highly imprudent to carry that article of the treaty into effect. Besides, the stipulation had been made with a reference to the relative situation of the contracting parties at the time of concluding the treaty. That situation had experienced a material change, by the fresh acquisitions of territory which Buonaparté had afterwards made, and by the consequent addition of



power which he had secured. The Corsican's intentions, too, to dismember the Turkish empire, and to monopolize the commerce of the Levant, objects against which specific provisions were made in the Treaty, were too notorious not to call for measures of adequate precaution on the part of Great Britain. The British Ministers, indeed, were to blame only for having carried a system of conciliation and concession to a greater length than was compatible with the dignity of the national character. It was easy to perceive, from the very beginning of the peace, that such a system would have no other effect on the mind of Buonaparté, than to increase its insolence and presumption. And, to say the truth, he had more reason than would be generally admitted, to infer, from what had been borne, what would be borne; though the inference proved unjust, from his ignorance of the real character of the English nation. At last, the inutility of every attempt to make the irritable and perverse Corsican recede from the fixed purpose of his mind, and to listen to the claims of justice, became so obvious, that the British Ambassador received orders to return to England. He accordingly left Paris, on the 12th of May, 1803, and, on the 18th of that month, the declaration of the British Cabinet was published.—Thus, after a



peace of little more than thirteen months, from the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens,—if that can be called a peace which brought with it no friendly disposition, no symptom of returning amity, no suspension even of aggressive measures, on the part of France,—the nation found itself, by the obstinate temper and insatiate ambition of a low-born usurper, once more exposed to all the dangers of protracted warfare; and the public were compelled to acknowledge the wisdom and foresight of those statesmen and writers, who had early warned them to place no reliance on the continuance of a state of abstinence from hostility, which depended entirely on the will of an individual who subjected his passions to no controul, and who confined his hatred within no bounds.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Fallacy of Mr. Addington's hopes of the permanence of the Peace of Amiens—Motives of Mr. Pitt's approbation of the Peace—He supports the Ministers on the renewal of hostilities—Different opinions respecting the War—Examination of the arguments on that subject—Mr. Pitt's Speech on the War—He enforces the necessity of vigorous measures as the only efficient means of defeating the designs of the enemy—Deprecates the adoption of a weak and timid system of policy—The Ministers neglect to follow his advice—Different qualifications necessary for a SPEAKER and a PREMIER, a *Naval Cammander*, and a *First Lord of the Admiralty*—Colonel Patten's motion of censure—Mr. Pitt moves the previous question—His conduct on this occasion blamed by both parties—Justification of that conduct, and of the principles by which he was uniformly actuated, when out of place—His Speech on the means of national defence—Reproves Ministers for their inefficiency—Moves for papers, with a view to an Inquiry into the criminal neglect of the Admiralty—Proves the existence of a torpid inactivity in that Board—His motion opposed by Ministers—Mr. Sheridan accuses him of "factionous and party motives."—He pronounces a panegyric on Lord St. Vincent—Instances of gross ignorance and imprudence in the Board of Admiralty—Mr. Sheridan compares Lord St. Vincent with the late Lord



Chatham—Injustice and folly of the comparison shown—Mr. Pitt extols the naval character of Lord St. Vincent—His reply to Mr. Sheridan—He proves the reduced state of the Navy since the Peace of Amiens—His motion rejected by the House—Weakness of Mr. Addington's Administration becomes more and more evident—The Premier makes overtures to Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt refuses to come into power without his former Colleagues—Mr. Addington refusing to admit Lord Grenville into the Cabinet, the negotiation is broken off—Change of conduct in Mr. Addington after this fruitless attempt—Mr. Fox's motion on the military state of the nation—Supported by Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt differs from Mr. Fox on the power of the King to call his subjects to arms in the case of invasion—Thoughts on this subject—Mr. Fox's motion rejected by a majority of fifty-two—Another debate on the same subject—Majority in favour of the Minister only thirty-seven—Mr. Addington resigns—The King commands Mr. Pitt to form a new Ministry—The Grenville party refuse to come into power without Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt presses his Majesty to admit Mr. Fox into the Cabinet, but is unable to remove his Majesty's objections—Letter from Lord Grenville to Mr. Pitt—Examination of the arguments urged in that letter—The King's objection investigated, and proved to be valid—Reflections on the conduct of Lord Grenville—Probable consequences of a Cabinet formed on the *latitudinarian* principle advanced by his Lordship—The new Ministry—State of the country on Mr. Pitt's return to power—State of the Continent—Murder of the Duke D'Enghien—It excites great disgust in France—Spirited remonstrance of Russia and Sweden on the subject—Base conduct of Prussia, and of the Princes of Germany—Buonaparté assumes the title of Emperor of the French—Cowardice of the Pope in crowning the murderer of the Duke D'Enghien—Mili-



tary measures proposed by Mr. Pitt—Discussions in the House of Commons—The Ministers' plan carried by a small majority—Mr. Sheridan's Speech—Declares party-contentions to be objects of greater importance than the means of national defence—Mr. Grey obtains a majority in the House of Commons by a party-manceuvre—Mr. Stanhope pronounces such conduct to be “disgraceful and contemptible.”—Inconsistency of the Speaker—Mr. Sheridan *disinterestedly* calls on Mr. Pitt to resign—Mr. Pitt refuses to obey the call, and pledges himself to retain his place—Retrospective view of Irish affairs—Insurrection of the twenty-third of July, 1803—Committee of Papists in Dublin—Meeting of the Corporation of Dublin—Resolutions passed against the Catholic Petition—Reflections on the conduct of the Viceroy in dismissing Mr. John Giffard, for moving these resolutions—War with Spain—Debates on the subject in the House of Commons—Mr. Pitt's Speech—He proposes resolutions opposing the conduct of Ministers, which are carried by three hundred and three votes against one hundred and six—Mr. Sheridan's motion for the repeal of the additional Force Act—Mr. Pitt answers him—False statement of Mr. Sheridan corrected—His motion lost—Petition of the Irish Papists for Emancipation—Intended to harass the Minister—Speech of Lord Limerick in the House of Lords—His Lordship asserts, that the Papists were goaded on by the English Opposition to present their petition—Mr. Fox supports the petition in the Commons—Is most ably answered by Dr. Duigenan—Mr. Grattan's speech—Animadversions on the doctrine of Dr. Milner, a Papist prelate, quoted, and approved by Dr. Lawrence—Mr. Pitt opposes the motion—Acknowledges the influence of the Romish Priests in exciting rebellion in Ireland—Suggests the propriety of making such Priests stipendiaries of the state—Declares the sense of the nation to be decidedly



against the prayer of the petition — Sir George Hill reprobates the petition as “a mere party-trick.”—Motion rejected by three hundred and thirty-six votes against one hundred and twenty-four—Mr. Whitbread’s motion against Mr. Pitt for advancing money to Boyd and Benfield—Negatived by the House—Lord Melville exposes the misconduct of the Admiralty in the House of Lords—Proceedings against his Lordship in the Commons—Impeachment of his Lordship—His acquittal by the Peers—Reflections on this proceeding; particularly on the conduct of the House of Commons, in condemning his Lordship without hearing him in his own defence, and in punishing him before he was tried—Examination of the constitutional powers of the House on judicial questions—Honourable conduct of Mr. Pitt on this occasion—Propriety of the Speaker’s vote questioned—Mr. Addington created Viscount Sidmouth, and made Lord President of the Council—He demands of Mr. Pitt the office of First Lord of the Admiralty for his friend, Lord Buckinghamshire—Mr. Pitt refuses, and Lords Sidmouth and Buckinghamshire send in their resignations—On reflection they recal this hasty step—They again resign their places, and their resignations are accepted—Declining state of Mr. Pitt’s health—Continental affairs—Wise and vigorous policy of Russia—Buonaparté crowned King of Italy—Renewal of hostilities in Germany—Surrender of Ulm—Battle of Austerlitz—Peace of Presburgh—Naval victory off Trafalgar—Death of Lord Nelson—Brilliant Administration of Marquis Wellesley in the East—Mr. Pitt repairs to Bath—Returns to Putney—His last illness—His death and character—Public honours paid to his memory—The House of Commons pass a vote for the payment of his debts.



[1803-1804.] The renewal of hostilities, after so short an interval of tranquillity, exposed the fallacy of those hopes, and the weakness of those expectations, which the new Ministers, and their literary partisans, had fondly cherished, and sedulously diffused, respecting the permanence of the peace of Amiens. Mr. Addington had even flattered himself, that, in calculating its probable duration, he might assign it as long an existence as any peace concluded in the last century.\* It is matter of surprize, indeed, that any one who had attended to the invariable principles of the revolutionary government of France, to the public conduct of its successive rulers, and to the sentiments and disposition uniformly displayed by the man who had recently usurped the sovereignty of that unhappy country, could, for one moment, have drawn a conclusion so utterly destitute of foundation in the premises whence it was deduced. But the Premier was unwilling to dispel, in his own head, the *delirium* which he had excited in the heads of the great majority of the people. The peace was his darling child ; it was, at once, the end and the reward of his ambition ; it was the idol at

\* See Mr. Addington's speech, on May 14, 1802 ; and his Memoirs, p. 206.



whose shrine he bowed, with blind and superstitious reverence; it was the basis of his popularity; the great specimen of his political wisdom; his paramount claim to pre-eminence of patriotism; the foundation of his fame; the theme of his admiration; the object of his daily contemplation; the constant food of his self-approving mind.\* The rude hand of the Corsican, however, had abruptly dispelled this strange delusion; and the Minister had now

\* The boisterous eloquence of Lord Ellenborough, who, in the course of debate, not unfrequently laboured to atone for weakness of argument, by violence of gesture, was employed, with forensic pertinacity, to defend every part and principle of the treaty of Amiens. And, so zealous an advocate was his Lordship, in behalf of his ministerial clients, that he found subject for congratulation in a flagrant departure from the forms of treaty invariably pursued by our ancestors. At the commencement of all former treaties, the different treaties which had bound together the separate members of the great commonwealth of Europe, had been specifically renewed and confirmed, in order to give greater security to the new bond of amity. It remained, however, for the acute penetration of this forensic statement, to discover the folly of our ancestors, in this respect; and for his sagacity, to exult “in the annihilation of all *that useless trash* which was contained in fourteen or fifteen treaties; and which, if they had been renewed, would have militated against every rule of reason and common sense. As to the revival of treaties, noble Lords might as well talk of reviving the condition of mankind in some very remote period!”



to contend with difficulties of a far different description, and which required the exertion of far different talents, from those which presented themselves at the conferences at Amiens.

Mr. Pitt, who had thought the peace an experiment necessary to be made, and who was persuaded, that, unless it were tried, the nation at large would never be brought to discredit the groundless assertions of that factious party, which had incessantly represented the war as equally useless, unnecessary, and unjust; and had uniformly insisted on the pacific disposition of the French government; and, consequently, that they would never give that full, cordial, and unanimous support to the prosecution of the war, which is, at all times, desirable, and which is often necessary to ensure success to the efforts of the government,—now stood forward, on the renewal of hostilities, to give to Ministers the same manly and independent support, which he had hitherto afforded to all such of their measures as he could conscientiously approve.

In the discussions which took place in Parliament, upon this subject, those members, who had opposed the peace, proved the most conspicuous and determined opponents of the principle on which the war was renewed. But they narrowed the question too much, by contending,



that the refusal to surrender Malta was the sole cause of renewed hostilities. It must, indeed, be admitted, that the grounds on which the Ministers, and their supporters, defended the peace, justified, in some degree, this contracted view of the subject. It had been stated, by the author of the Memoirs of Mr. Addington, whose sentiments were assuredly approved by the Ministers, that the war being a war of conservation, not of aggrandizement; a war defensive, to secure ourselves; not offensive, to injure others; the conditions of the peace corresponded with the professed objects for which, at first, we had entered into the conflict; for, by these, we maintained our constitution unimpaired; our territories undiminished; our national honour untarnished. Besides these advantages, we had gained two valuable islands, and a large tract of country in the East Indies. It was farther contended, "that, as the British empire, now left alone, had no object for which to contend, with any prospect of success, the protracting of war would be but to waste treasure, to shed blood, and to exhaust strength, for no useful purpose whatever; an act this, of political imprudence, if not of moral wickedness, when the war could be terminated on conditions of peace, fair, equitable, salutary,



and honourable;”\* and such the Ministers insisted the conditions of the peace of Amiens were. If this were a true state of the case, the arguments of those who opposed the grounds on which the war was renewed would be irresistible. For, certain it is, that had the Ministers surrendered Malta, peace might have been prolonged, at least, for a short time. And, if “we had no object for which to contend with any prospect of success,” at the period when the treaty of Amiens was signed; and if, by that treaty, we had secured the professed objects of the war; if the aggrandizement of France were really, as it was contended, not an object of sufficient consequence to justify a continuance of the contest; and if, as was also maintained, all the objections to the surrender of Malta were unreasonable; our object having been “to rescue it from foreign domination, not to capture it as a common spoil of war,” and, therefore, it would be unjust to retain it; if all this were admitted, as it was by Ministers, the renewal of the war could not be defended. For no act of France, subsequent to the definitive treaty, could make such an alteration in the state of Europe, as, consistently with the prin-

\* Brief Memoirs of Mr. Addington's administration, &c. p. 168.



ciples thus laid down, could be of sufficient consequence to justify the British government in departing from that pacific system which had led to, and followed, this treaty. Besides, if there were no prospect of success in contending with France for any object of national importance, at the period in question, certainly that prospect was not at all brightened by the ministerial operations during the short interval of peace. A very large portion of our army had been disbanded; the greater part of our fleets dismantled; our naval arsenals nearly exhausted; and, from a miserable system of mistaken economy, no care had been taken to replenish our naval stores with such articles as were indispensably necessary for the equipment of a large fleet, at the commencement of a war. The Ministers, then, had much the worst of the argument, on this point.

But, taking up the argument in another point of view, and without any reference to the dicta of Ministers, the renewal of hostilities was as much an act of necessity as the original war in 1793. For, although France had taken several steps to increase her power, between the period of the preliminary treaty and that of the definitive treaty, yet still she had made further strides towards the unlimited extension of her dominion and influence, which fully



justified a government, actuated by becoming principles of national dignity and of national security, principles more noble and expansive, than those on which the peace of Amiens was formed, to declare war against her. The relative situation of the two countries had experienced, by the aggressive acts of Buonaparte, a material change; and it was manifest to the world, that his policy was directed to the attainment of such an ascendancy in Europe, as would enable him to prescribe laws to surrounding nations, and to contend successfully with the only power which had set his threats at defiance. Here was a legitimate ground of war; such a ground as had induced our ancestors, both Whigs and Tories, to fly to arms, on various occasions, in order to chastise the insolence, to repress the ambition, and to check the career, of their natural enemy. Farther acts of aggression, too, had been committed by Buonaparté, in sending agents to Egypt, and to different parts of the British territory, *avowedly*, for *commercial* purposes; (though most of them were *military* men) but, in fact, for no other purpose than that of taking correct accounts of all those matters and objects which a power, wishing to conquer a country, and to reduce it under its own dominion, would be solicitous to obtain.



It was on these grounds that Mr. Pitt defended the justice and necessity of the new war, in Parliament; of the merits and nature of which he took a luminous view, when it became the subject of discussion, in the House of Commons, on the 20th of May, 1803. He then expressed his conviction, that some system, far more vigorous and effectual than any which had yet been adopted, would be found necessary, both in our finance, and in the preparation for national defence. On the provisions to be made for these two primary and paramount objects, it would principally depend, in his estimation, whether we could effectually disconcert the favourite projects, and disappoint the main hopes, of our enemies. It was evident, that, if they indulged themselves in any expectation of success in the present contest, it was built chiefly on the supposition that they could either break the spirit, and shake the determination, of the country, by harassing us with the perpetual apprehension of descent upon our coasts, or that they could impair our resources, and undermine our credit, by the effects of an expensive and protracted contest. To defeat the first of these purposes, it was not, in his judgment, sufficient to make those naval and military preparations, which would prevent any invasion that might be attempted, from being



ultimately successful ; (an event which, he trusted, he was justified, in common with others, in considering as utterly impossible) but to make such vigorous and extensive arrangements for national defence as might diffuse a sense of the most complete security against even the temporary impression to be produced by such an attempt, and might enable every individual to lay down his head in rest, in the persuasion and confidence that nothing was omitted which could enable us at once to meet and repel the danger, at any moment, and in any quarter, in which it might threaten us.

In order to defeat the second object, that of wearing out our resources, Mr. Pitt trusted the House would, from the beginning, form a system of finance not with a view only to the expence which might be necessary in the first year of the contest, but that they would look, at once, to the possibility of its being protracted to as long a period as that which had been lately terminated—that they would consider fully what, on the probable scale of the war, would be the whole extent of the burthens necessary to be imposed, on that supposition. He was persuaded that it could only be by providing, at the outset, means adequate to the whole extent of these purposes, that we could, in fact, prevent the ultimate amount of our



expences from being unnecessarily, and, perhaps, intolerably, augmented; or that we could ensure the best chances, either of bringing the contest to a speedy conclusion, by convincing the enemy of our ability to maintain it, or could meet its continued exigencies, if necessary, without the annual recurrence of growing and accumulated embarrassments. He trusted, therefore, that Ministers would feel the necessity of bringing both these points under consideration, with all practicable promptitude and dispatch; and that, if possible, not even a fortnight might be suffered to elapse, without enabling Parliament to adopt such measures as would convince both France and the world, that we had, from that hour, provided the means of supporting the force, and of defraying the expenditure, which might be necessary for the maintenance of our internal security, and for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, to any period to which it could be reasonably expected to extend. He was aware that these measures could not be effected without material and extensive personal sacrifices, and without great additional burthens, which must, in a certain degree, affect the ease, convenience, and even comfort, of many classes of society. He lamented these consequences as much as any man; and, if he saw any prospect that, by pre-



sent concession, we could obtain a real and desirable interval of peace, security, and repose, he should be as anxious as any man to avoid the necessity of such arduous and painful exertions; but, under the present circumstances, a weak and timid policy would, perhaps, scarcely even postpone the moment when they would become indispensable for our existence, and would, infallibly, expose us to the certainty of a similar struggle, at no distant period, without those means which we now possessed, and with a diminished chance of finally conducting it to a successful issue. At that moment we had not an option between the blessings of peace and the dangers of war. From the fatality of the times, and the general state of the world, Mr. Pitt observed, we must consider our lot as cast by the decrees of Providence, in a time of peril and trouble. He trusted the temper and the courage of the nation would be conformable to the duties which such a situation imposed, that we should be prepared, collectively and individually, to meet it with that resignation and fortitude, and, at the same time, with that active zeal and exertion, which, in proportion to the magnitude of the crisis, might be expected from a brave and free people; and that we should remember, even in the hour of trial, what abundant reason we had to be grateful to



Providence for the distinction which we enjoyed, over most of the countries of Europe, and for all the advantages and blessings which national wisdom and virtue had hitherto produced, and which it now depended on perseverance in the same just and honourable sentiments, still to guard and preserve.

It had been well for the Ministers had they followed this able, manly, and judicious advice; but it very soon appeared, that they were but ill qualified for guiding the helm of state, in such a stormy and tempestuous season; and the nation became convinced, that the solemn and stately tone and demeanour, the sterile knowledge of parliamentary forms, and that superficial information respecting common constitutional points, that may be collected from any of our elementary law books, which suffice to qualify a man for the discharge of the monotonous and laborious duties of Speaker to the House of Commons, are by no means adequate to constitute an able Minister of State. Nor were they more slow to acknowledge the difference between the talents necessary to make a good commander of a fleet, and the abilities requisite to form an efficient First Lord of the Admiralty.

In the month of June, 1803, Colonel Patten brought forward a formal motion of cen-



sure on the Ministers, comprised in five resolutions, which, substantially, charged them with having deceived the nation, and betrayed the interests of the country, by holding out hopes of continued peace, at the very time when, according to their subsequent declarations, they knew that France was pursuing an unvaried course of aggression, violence, and insult. As a proof of their incapacity, and criminal inattention to their duty, it was stated, in one of these resolutions, that, on the 16th of October, 1802, counter-orders were dispatched by Ministers, revoking the orders before given for the surrender of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the other conquests made by England during the late war; and that the final orders, in consequence of which that settlement was actually evacuated, were issued on the 16th of November, when the hostile spirit of France had (as afterwards avowed by Ministers) been manifested, for more than six months, by one continued series of aggression, violence, and insult, for which neither reparation nor redress had, to that moment, been obtained; that the offensive principle had already been distinctly advanced, of excluding his Majesty from all concerns in the affairs of the continent; that the Spanish and other priories had already been withdrawn from the order of Malta;



Piedmont, Parma, Piacenza, and Elba, had been annexed to France; Switzerland had been attacked and subjugated, and the remonstrance of his Majesty's government upon that subject had been treated with indignity and contempt; the territory of the Batavian Republic was, at that very moment, still occupied by the armies of the chief Consul of France, and its internal administration still controuled by his interposition; and the French government was then actually engaged in the pursuit of those plans and measures for the subversion of the Turkish empire, to which his Majesty's declaration referred, as a violation of the treaty of peace; that, in directing, under such circumstances, the final surrender of the Cape, without having previously explained or arranged the numerous points of difference and complaint which then actually subsisted between the two governments, his Majesty's Ministers acted in contradiction to the sense which they had themselves manifested of their own duty, and had, improvidently, exposed to danger some of the most important interests of his Majesty's dominions.

Mr. Pitt, in considering this question, differed from both sides of the House; for, on the one hand, he did not think that sufficient proof of the alleged misconduct had been made out to ustify the charges preferred, in the



resolutions, in their full extent, and, therefore, he could not vote for them; and, on the other, the justification offered by Ministers did not satisfy him that their conduct was exempt from blame; and, therefore, he could not vote for a direct negative on the resolutions, which would be tantamount to a denial of all ground of censure. For this reason he moved, that the other orders of the day should be read. Though it is perfectly clear, that, in his view of the subject, he could not conscientiously adopt any other mode of proceeding, he was, nevertheless, blamed for his conduct by both parties. The Ministers thought, that, as he could not concur with their opponents, he ought to have voted with them; and the Opposition conceived, that, as he could not justify the whole conduct of the Ministers, he ought to have joined in their vote of censure. But Mr. Pitt was of no party; and, consequently, his conduct was not influenced by party-motives. He did not consider whether the effect of his vote might tend to secure Ministers in their seats, or to drive them out of them. The real merits of the question were alone allowed to bias his judgment, and to influence his vote. He, indeed, expressly declared, that his esteem for many members of the administration should not prevent him from the strict discharge of his duty,



and from concurring in an address to the Throne for their removal from office, if the papers upon the table afforded evidence of their incapacity, misconduct, or criminality. But, as they did not, in his opinion, supply such evidence, it would have been a gross deviation from moral rectitude, and political honesty, to vote for a motion founded on the supposition that they did supply it. On the other hand, if he thought that Ministers had not acted with sufficient caution, vigilance, and firmness, he could not, without a sacrifice of conscience, concur in a vote which went to exempt them from all imputation of blame. In short, his conduct upon this, as upon all important occasions, was that of an honest, upright, independent Member of Parliament. As in administration, so “in retirement,”—to use the words of one who had well studied Mr. Pitt’s character—“we see him displaying the same greatness, the same activity, the same patriotism. His loyalty depended not upon office; his love of his country was equally evident in every situation. Instead of a peevish secession from the discharge of his public duty, or a hostile obstruction to the measures of the new administration, which must instantly have sunk under the weight of his opposition, he gave them their best claim to credit, in the country, by an open



declaration in their favour, and by a direct avowal of his determination to assist them while they acted upon the principles which had been the rule of his own conduct. This assistance he gave publicly and privately, with a zeal and disinterestedness of which there is no other instance in the history of political parties.”\*

Mr. Pitt took an active part in all the discussions on the best means of defending the country against the threatened invasion of the enemy, at this critical period. The national defence was a subject to which, it appears, he had directed all the powers of his active, acute, and comprehensive, mind. The measures proposed by Ministers, for the general defence of the country, in the summer of 1803, had his support, as far as they went; but it was his opinion—an opinion, indeed, with which the nation concurred—that they did not go far enough; that government did not seem to have a proper sense of the danger to which the country was exposed, and that, consequently, they did not apply means of adequate strength for repelling it. In all the debates on this important point, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Windham distinguished themselves most; both of them differing, essentially, from Ministers, in the measures which they proposed in 1804;—both equally solicitous to

\* Tomline's speech on the character of Mr. Pitt.



render the military power of the state efficient for offensive, as well as for defensive, purposes; but not entirely agreeing with each other as to the most eligible means for producing that desirable effect. Mr. Windham considered the volunteers as useless, if not worse than useless, and contended for the necessity of an exclusive reliance on a regular army; while Mr. Pitt regarded a formidable and regular force as indispensably necessary; but, at the same time, thought a large body of volunteers as essentially important to the defence of the country.

In a debate, on the 27th of February, 1804, Mr. Pitt reproved Ministers for not having taken sufficient care to render the volunteers as useful and efficient as they were capable of being made by proper discipline, and instruction in military evolutions. After pointing out the means which appeared to him most proper for remedying this defect, he adverted to the low state of our naval preparation. In this statement, he declared, he was not influenced by the slightest prejudice against any man; on the contrary, in the whole of his observations, he wished to keep aloof from every description of asperity, which, he thought, ought not, upon any account, to be introduced in the course of that discussion. This was not a time for the operation of any party-spirit. Every mind



should be engaged, every heart should be devoted, to the consideration of the public defence; and, in the prosecution of it, he expressed his hope, that Ministers would weigh well the sacred duty they had to perform, the awful responsibility of their situation. It would not be enough for them to say, that our preparations were great—they ought to be complete. He postponed, however, the full declaration of his sentiments, on the actual state of the naval defence of the country, till the 15th of March, when he made some specific motions on the subject.

His first motion was for an address to the King, “that he may be pleased to give directions to have laid before the House an account of the number of ships of the line, ships of fifty guns, frigates, sloops of war, bombs, hired armed vessels, &c. in commission on the 31st of December, 1793, on the 30th of September, 1801, and on the 31st of December, 1803, specifying the service in which they were respectively employed.” His next motion was, “that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, for a copy of the contracts made, and the orders given, by the Lords of the Admiralty, in 1793, 1797, and 1803, with respect to the number of gun-vessels to be built, distinguishing the time at which such contract was made, the period at which it was to be



brought to a conclusion, and the account of the sum to be paid for the performance of it." His third motion was, "that there be laid before the House a list of such ships as have been built, in the King's yards, in 1793 and 1801."

Mr. Pitt acknowledged, that the object of these different motions was to obtain proof of a criminal neglect, in the Board of Admiralty, to provide a sufficient force for the defence of the country, in the present critical situation of public affairs. He stated that, since the present Lords of the Admiralty had come into office, only two ships of the line had been contracted for, to be built in the merchants' yards; while, during the last war, only two ships of the line had been furnished by the King's yards, out of twenty-nine ships of the line; and that there were, at that moment, docks and slips in the river unoccupied, which were calculated for building fourteen or fifteen ships of the line.—He also charged the Admiralty with having admitted the necessity of gun-brigs, and other vessels drawing little water, to counteract any efforts which might be made, by the immense number of light vessels, stationed at Boulogne and elsewhere, for the avowed purpose of attempting a descent upon some part of the British shores. Mr. Pitt expressed his surprize at the opposition which



was made to his motions, because Ministers had previously applied to him to be informed of the nature of them, and which information he gave them; and he understood, that it was their intention to assent to two of the motions, without any objections being suggested.

One of the most strenuous opposers of Mr. Pitt's motions was Mr. Sheridan, who did not blush to declare, that he "could only be actuated by factious and party motives!!!"—He was probably led to prefer this most unfounded charge, by a consciousness of its applicability to his own public conduct for some years past. He could not bear the smallest reflection on a *Whig* Minister; and, therefore, sought to counteract the effects of Mr. Pitt's plain statements, by a declamatory panegyric on the services of Lord St. Vincent, of which, however, he deemed it prudent to avoid all specification. In the blindness of his zeal, he ridiculed the idea of gun-brigs, although the Admiralty had recently acknowledged their utility, by ordering *twenty* of them to be built, and totally forgot, that there were numerous parts of our coast, most exposed to attack, which ships of the line could not possibly approach; and which, therefore, in the event of an attempt at invasion, would admit of no other *naval* defence than gun-boats, or armed vessels of a similar nature. He proclaimed



abuses in every department of the navy, and highly extolled the zeal displayed in their correction ; although, in fact, that zeal had been exerted only, or, at least, *chiefly*, in a way the most prejudicial to the naval service, and, consequently, the most detrimental to the interests of the country. Lord St. Vincent, seeing nothing but abuses, in the naval department, and blind, as it were, to the inestimable services which the navy had rendered to the country, under this system of imputed corruption, began a *radical reform*, with all the zeal and energy of a modern Whig. Acknowledging even the existence of abuses, to a considerable extent in that department, no man of sense, judgment, or reflection, could suppose, that they admitted of an instantaneous cure. It was manifest, that, if, instead of alteratives administered by the slow and cautious hand of prudence, to work a gradual melioration in the constitution of the navy, a rash empiric should exhibit the most powerful medicines, he might chance to *kill* where he proposed to *cure*. The harsh and severe measures adopted by the Admiralty gave great disgust to the workmen employed in the dock yards, and to every description of persons throughout the naval department. From a mistaken principle of economy, blended, perhaps, with an unwarrantable confidence in the pacific disposition of the French Cabinet, the naval



stores were suffered to be wholly exhausted; the hemp collected by the late Ministers was publicly sold, and the agents of France were the principal purchasers; no care was taken to procure a fresh supply; even the most advantageous offers of providing ship-timber were rejected; the shipwrights, employed in the King's yards, were abruptly dismissed, without being allowed to finish the vessels, which they had contracted to build; the ships which, upon the declaration of war, it was necessary to send against the enemy, were many of them actually under repair; and no new ships were in such a state of forwardness as to afford a prospect of supplying the void occasioned by the inevitable casualties of the service. In short, so incompetent a Board of Admiralty had not been seen for a long series of years.

Mr. Fox, and other members of the new Whig party, took a different side from that which Mr. Sheridan adopted, and voted for the enquiry, in the full conviction, that it would terminate to the honour of their favourite Admiral. The inquiry, however, was strenuously resisted, as unnecessary, and as only calculated to waste the time of the House, by the Minister, who vied with the Opposition in panegyrising the First Lord of the Admiralty. Nothing, however, but presumption and igno-



rance combined, could have compared him with the late Lord Chatham, and have assigned to him the compliment bestowed on that real patriot—"clarum et memorabile nomen," &c. It is a matter of doubt, whether unmerited praise is not more prejudicial in its effects, than undeserved censure. The latter may discourage, but the former must disgust; and it is more easy to stimulate a discouraged spirit, than to conciliate a disgusted mind. No man ever enjoyed so high a reputation, who had done so little to deserve it, as Lord St. Vincent. In the whole course of his naval career, there is not much to applaud, and very little to admire; and whoever has taken pains to investigate the details of that gallant action to which he was indebted for his title and pension, must, if he be not influenced by prejudice, or biassed by party, acknowledge that, as far as Lord St. Vincent was concerned in it, there was no opportunity for the display of particular skill, spirit, or judgment; while the peculiar circumstances attending it must satisfy the impartial mind, that never was service so slight so profusely rewarded.\*

\* I am aware that, in this remark, I run counter to the general prejudices of the country; and no one respects more than myself the honest enthusiasm which confers praise on imputed gallantry, without taking the trouble to examine the grounds of it. The remark, however, has not been made



Besides, there were many defects in the public character of this nobleman, which it is not necessary for the historian to enumerate. But Lord St. Vincent was a Whig;—and party-

without an attentive consideration of the public services of the nobleman to whom it relates. I have heard his professional judgment, and his personal courage, highly extolled; and I am far from wishing to question the justice of such praise. But a close and impartial examination of the whole of his public conduct, having convinced me that there is much more in it to censure than to commend, I have felt it to be my duty, not to suffer the bold assertions of interested partisans, the liberal concessions of timid politicians, nor the ostentatious display of self-confidence, and of fancied superiority, to deter me from expressing that conviction without reserve or disguise.

As to the battle off Cape St Vincent, I do not mean to deny to the Commander-in-chief any portion of the praise which may be due to him, for availing himself of the opportunity afforded him by the unskilful manœuvres of the Spanish Admiral, which produced a complete separation of his force, to attack that division of the enemy's fleet which held out the fairest hopes of success, and promised the easiest conquest. But here, I contend, the merit of the Commander ended; and hence it is, that I have been led to consider, that his services on that day were greatly overrated. Of the subsequent events it is foreign from my purpose to enter into any detail. I shall merely observe, that they tended most strongly to confirm me in my opinion.

In my account of the battle of St. Vincent, (Vol. V. p. 169, Note) I observed, that, in the Admiral's official dispatch to the Admiralty, he took not the smallest notice of the extraordinary exertions of his officers and men. I have since learnt that, in his *private* letter to the Board, or to the First Lord, he did



spirit was suffered, as is, unhappily, too often the case, to supply the place of superior merit. It is true, however, that Mr. Pitt himself concurred in the praises so bountifully lavished on Lord St. Vincent.—“ I admire,” he said, “ the uncommon valour, I extol the vast renown, the glorious achievements, of Lord St. Vincent. To him we are highly indebted for shedding extraordinary lustre on our national glory.” But as, in attentively examining the public services of his lordship, I have not been able to discover any solid ground for this admiration and praise, I cannot acquiesce in its justice, by whatever authority advanced. Mr. Pitt, at the same time, expressed his opinion, “ that, between his lordship, as a commander on the sea, and his lordship, as First Lord of the Admiralty, there is a wide difference.”

In his reply Mr. Pitt entered more largely into the subject than he had done in opening his speech. Alluding to Mr. Sheridan's observations, he said,—“ But we are amused with a brilliant flash of eloquence, (not lately a source of ordinary entertainment in this House) and the most ample justice to their gallantry and good conduct. Still, however, the force of my observation remains; for, by confining his praises to a letter which the public never saw, and by omitting them in the dispatch which every body read, he departed from the conduct invariably pursued by other commanders.



we are told, 'all this scheme of gun-vessels is a job.' This sentiment, cloathed in a wandering meteor, which fixed its ray of indignation upon me, shall not so far dazzle my organs of vision, as to prevent me from discovering the way by which I may relieve myself from the terrors of its effulgence. It is not necessary to conclude, because a service has been converted into a job, that it is an useless service. If pernicious food had been given to the honourable gentleman, he would not conceive it to be a reason for abstaining from all nourishment ; so, in the former case, we must learn to distinguish between accident and substance ; and, rejecting what is injurious, retain what is valuable." Ministers, having boasted of the comparative force of the navy, at the period when they came into power, and at the time of the present discussion, Mr. Pitt stated, that, in 1801, we had 101 sloops, whereas now we had but 84 ; we then had 69 gun-vessels, we had now 37 ; we then had 101 cutters, we had now 52.

The difference between the statements of Ministers, and those of their opponents, were so great, that nothing short of the production of the official documents moved for by Mr. Pitt, could suffice to ascertain the truth, and to satisfy the public mind. The Ministers, however, pertinaciously refused to produce them, and a



majority of *seventy-one* sanctioned their resolution, *one hundred and thirty* having voted for Mr. Pitt's motion, and *two hundred and one* against it.

The eyes of the country began to be opened, by these discussions, to the incapacity of Mr. Addington's administration. The neglect not only to provide adequate means of defence at home,\* but to animate the drooping spirits of the Continent, to resist the continued encroachments, and aggressions of France, betrayed a systematic weakness, an absence of wisdom in council, and of vigour in action, which demonstrated their inability to conduct the affairs of the State, with honour to themselves, or with advantage to the nation. In December, 1803, Buonaparté had the audacity to tell England, in his official gazette, "*You shall not retain Malta; you shall not obtain Lampedosa; and you shall sign a treaty less advantageous to you*

\* Such was the alarm excited at the weak and inadequate measures of national defence adopted by the Ministers, that, about this time, a respectable Member of Parliament strenuously urged me, as a public writer, to employ my pen to rouse them to a more lively sense of their danger, and to a more active and efficient discharge of their duty. In answer to this call I observed, that I thought his TONGUE in Parliament would prove infinitely more operative than my PEN out of Parliament; and I must do him the justice to say, that he was not silent upon this important subject.



*than that of Amiens!*"\* Such language as this was never used, with impunity, to England, before this revolutionary period; and the only becoming answer to it would have been, the most instantaneous adoption of an active and vigorous system of *offensive* warfare; a system which would have enabled our fleets and armies to hurl destruction on their insolent foe;—to keep his coasts in a constant state of alarm; to exhibit his impotence, even for the purpose of self-defence, in a striking point of view to his subjects, his tributaries, and his vassals; and to rouse, by the powerful operation of example, the dormant energies of the Continent, into strong and effective action. But so far was Mr. Addington from the adoption or encouragement of such decisive measures, that he seemed lost in self-congratulation and in self-confidence. It might naturally have been inferred, that he was stupified by the extraordinary height to which he had been unexpectedly raised,—that his weak head felt giddy when he looked down from the proud eminence on which he stood,—that his feet tottered under him, and that the strength of his intellects proved inadequate to sustain the awful weight of responsibility which he had, without due consideration, incurred,—had not

\* See *Moniteur*, Dec. 8, 1803.



the confident tone which he invariably assumed, the boldness with which he rejected the most judicious advice, the assurance with which he defended his own feeble, torpid, and impotent measures, forbidden the supposition, that he harboured the smallest doubt of the sufficiency of his own powers, to guide the vessel of the State, in perfect security, through the storms and tempests which assailed her on every side.

Whatever may be the cause, it is certain, that no efforts, adequate to the emergency, were made, either to counteract the effects of the enemy's boasted preparations, or to carry hostility to his own shores. The nation then were alarmed, and justly alarmed, at the torpidity of the Cabinet; and the incipient opposition of Mr. Pitt, whose friendly disposition to the Ministers was well known, tended materially to increase the apprehensions of the public. As soon, indeed, as a renewal of hostilities became unavoidable, Mr. Addington acknowledged the necessity of giving additional strength to the Cabinet; and, for this purpose, made some overtures to Mr. Pitt, in the spring of 1803. Mr. Pitt met this proposal with becoming candour; he professed his readiness, should he be honoured with his Majesty's commands for that purpose, to form a strong and efficient administration, including, of course, those statesmen



with whom he had before acted; particularly Earl Spencer, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Windham. But such an administration by no means suited the views of Mr. Addington, who, if he did not retain the office of Premier, which it was scarcely to be supposed Mr. Pitt would submit to, resolved, at least, to preserve a majority in the Cabinet. He, therefore, objected strongly to the admission of Lords Spencer and Grenville, and Mr. Windham, into the administration, against whom, independently of the objection already stated, he conceived he had personal grounds of complaint, as they had pointedly attacked him in Parliament. On this difference the negotiation broke off. Mr. Addington made several appeals to the public, through different channels, or, rather, perhaps, appeals were made for him, with a view to justify his own conduct, and to inculcate that of Mr. Pitt, on the subject of these overtures. Various tracts were published on both sides, but all the powers of sophistry were inadequate to conceal the plain state of the question from the public eye. In fact, one moment's reflection will suffice to convince any rational being of the justice and reasonableness of Mr. Pitt's proposal. Had he acceded to Mr. Addington's terms, he would have been placed in a situation in which no Minister had ever yet stood, and in



which it might have been impossible for him to act with benefit to the country, or with honour to himself. Solely responsible, in the eyes of the nation, for the measures of government, yet without influence, and having but a single voice in the Cabinet, in which those measures must originate, he might, and very probably would, have been, not unfrequently reduced to the degrading necessity either of supporting in the House measures which he had condemned in the Cabinet, or else of publicly opposing his colleagues in office, and, thereby, of producing dissensions which must have materially affected the public service. It was to avert this evil, and to render his services effective, that Mr. Pitt refused to come into office without the aid of colleagues, whose talents had stood the test of long experience, and on whose principles and cordial concurrence he could place the firmest reliance. His conduct, then, was equally distinguished by honour and by wisdom; and, towering like the eagle on the cliff, he might look down with contempt on the weak efforts of the mole below, to undermine the lofty eminence on which he stood.

After the rejection of these overtures, Mr. Addington's public conduct displayed something like splenetic resentment; as if it were an affront to the dignity of a new and untried



Premier, to refuse to enlist under his banners, on his own conditions. The possession of power seems to have produced a revolution in his mind; to have converted diffidence into confidence; and conscious inferiority into asserted superiority. He certainly, from this period, received the valuable advice of that eminent statesman to whom he was principally indebted for his rise from the private ranks of society, to an elevated situation in life, with less deference and respect; he seemed to take delight in associating with himself, in the Minority, one of the very few public men who had betrayed a marked personal enmity to Mr. Pitt; and rather anxious to stand forward in opposition to the motions which Mr. Pitt occasionally submitted to the House.

But it was not to be supposed that, whatever confidence Mr. Addington might feel in his own powers, or in the support of his colleagues, his administration could long withstand the united attacks of Mr. Pitt and his friends; and of the other two parties in Parliament, headed, respectively, by Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville. Most of Mr. Addington's political associates were men of great respectability in private life; of sound principles, and of good intentions; but deficient in all the great essentials of a statesman; and destitute of that energy and



decision which are indispensably necessary to the good government of a country, in turbulent and troublesome times.

The defence of the country was the great rock on which the Addingtonian administration was destined to split. On the 23d of April, 1804, Mr. Fox moved for a committee to revise the several bills which had been proposed for the accomplishment of this great object, and for devising efficient measures for complete and permanent defence. Mr. Pitt supported this motion, and again took a comprehensive view of the actual state of the country, as to its means of military and of naval defence. There was but one point on which he and Mr. Fox differed on this occasion;—the power vested in the King by the Constitution, of calling out all the subjects of his realm to defend the country in case of invasion. Mr. Fox was, certainly, the first statesman who ever ventured to question the royal prerogative, in this particular. For nothing is more clearly laid down by all our law writers, ancient and modern, than that the power of calling on every description of his subjects to repair to his standard, when the enemy is about to invade his country, is vested in the King. It is a principle sanctioned, too, by the practice, as well as by the theory, of our Constitution; and a principle conducive



to the security of the nation. Mr. Pitt asserted and maintained this principle against the attacks of Mr. Fox. On all other points these rival statesmen agreed, and the result of this concurrence of sentiment was a strong division, in which the Ministers carried the question against the motion, by a majority of only *fifty-two*. Two hundred and four having voted for the motion of Mr. Fox, and two hundred and fifty-six against it.

Two days after this discussion, on the 25th of April, another debate took place on the same subject, in consequence of a motion by Mr. Secretary Yorke, for the House to resolve itself into a committee, on a bill for the suspension of the army of reserve act. This motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt; and, on the division, there appeared, in support of the ministerial plan, 240; against it, 203; leaving, to the Minister, a majority of only *thirty-seven*.

This additional mark of dissatisfaction with the conduct of Ministers proved the death blow to their expiring power. They immediately tendered their resignations, and the King, whose wishes were in unison with those of his people, consigned to Mr. Pitt the task of forming a new administration. When the strength of that Cabinet over which Mr. Pitt had before presided for so many years was con-



sidered, nothing appeared more easy than the formation of a new Ministry. It was naturally imagined, that those statesmen who had so long, and so cordially, united their efforts to preserve the State from danger, in the most perilous times, would be ready again to stand forward in her support, and to resume, in obedience to the call of their Sovereign, the same situations which they had so ably and so honourably filled before. Unhappily, it appeared that, since their secession from power, these noble persons had formed some new connections, or, at least, had imbibed some new ideas, respecting the materials of which a new administration ought to be formed. They thought, though it is difficult to conceive by what train of reasoning their minds had first been brought to such a conclusion, that no Ministry could be efficient, unless it were composed of the leading members of the three parties in Parliament;—those of Mr. Pitt, of Mr. Fox, and of Lord Grenville. Mr. Pitt had no objection, if it should be the King's wish, to admit Mr. Fox into the Cabinet; but his Majesty objected to this proposal, and supported his objection on grounds, the validity of which no one who had studied the public character, and traced the public conduct, of Mr. Fox, could, for a moment, dispute. Mr. Pitt urged his reasons, with becoming firmness, for



the expediency of comprizing Mr. Fox in the new Ministry; but he did not think it compatible with his duty as a subject, nor decorous in him as a statesman, to press this point more strongly upon the King, much less to make it the ground of withholding his own services from his Sovereign and his country.

Lord Grenville, however, and his associates in this new system, remained firm to their purpose, and rendered a compliance with their wishes the *sine quâ non* of their return to office. The following letter, from Lord Grenville to Mr. Pitt, was published, as the defence of their conduct on this occasion.

“ MY DEAR PITT,

“ I have already apprized you, that all the  
 “ persons to whom, at your desire, I communi-  
 “ cated what passed between us yesterday,  
 “ agree with me in the decided opinion, that  
 “ we ought not to engage in the administration  
 “ which you are now employed in forming.  
 “ We should be sincerely sorry if, by declining  
 “ this proposal, we should appear less desirous  
 “ than we must always be, of rendering to his  
 “ Majesty, to the utmost of our power, every  
 “ advice of which he may be graciously pleased  
 “ to think us capable. No consideration of  
 “ personal ease or comfort, no apprehension of  
 “ responsibility, nor reluctance to meet the



“ real situation into which the country has been  
 “ brought, have any weight in this decision ;  
 “ *nor are we fettered by any engagement on the*  
 “ *subject, either expressed or implied ;* we rest  
 “ our determination solely on our strong sense  
 “ of the impropriety of our becoming parties  
 “ to a system of government which is to be  
 “ formed, at such a moment as the present,  
 “ *on a principle of exclusion.*

“ It is unnecessary to dwell on the mis-  
 “ chiefs which have already resulted from  
 “ placing the offices of government in weak  
 “ and incapable hands. We see no hope of any  
 “ effectual remedy for these mischiefs, but by  
 “ uniting in the public service ‘ as large a pro-  
 “ portion as possible of the weight, talents,  
 “ and character,\* to be found in public men  
 “ of *all descriptions, and without any exception.*’  
 “ This opinion I have already had occasion to  
 “ express to you in the same words, and we  
 “ have, for some time past, been publicly  
 “ acting in conformity to it ; nor can we, while

\* His Lordship, after the death of Mr. Pitt, had an oppor-  
 tunity of forming an administration on his own favourite prin-  
 ciple ; and there is reason to believe, that the measures which  
 it adopted, for promoting “ the prosperity and safety” of the  
 country, were not such as to excite a wish for the repetition of  
 a similar experiment, by a similar combination of “ weight,  
 talents, and character.”



“ we remain impressed with that persuasion,  
 “ concur in defeating an object for which the  
 “ circumstances of the times afford at once so  
 “ strong an inducement, and so favourable an  
 “ occasion,

“ An opportunity now offers, such as this  
 “ country has seldom seen, for giving to its  
 “ government, in a moment of peculiar diffi-  
 “ culty, the full benefit of the services of all  
 “ those who, by the public voice and senti-  
 “ ment, are judged most capable of contri-  
 “ buting to its prosperity and safety. The  
 “ wishes of the public, upon this occasion, are  
 “ completely in unison with its interests, and  
 “ the advantages which, not this country  
 “ alone, but all Europe, and the whole civi-  
 “ lized world, might derive from the establish-  
 “ ment of such an administration, at such a  
 “ crisis, would probably have exceeded the  
 “ most sanguine expectations,

“ We are certainly not ignorant of the  
 “ difficulties which might have obstructed the  
 “ final accomplishment of such an object, how-  
 “ ever earnestly pursued. But when, in the  
 “ very first instance, all trial of it is precluded,  
 “ and when the denial is made the condition of  
 “ all subsequent arrangements, we cannot but  
 “ feel that there are no motives, of whatever  
 “ description, which could justify our taking



“ an active part in the establishment of a system so adverse to our deliberate and declared opinions. “ I remain,

“ My dear Pitt, &c. &c. &c.

(Signed) “ GRENVILLE.”

The want of that classical accuracy of language, which so generally marks the slightest compositions of the scholar and the gentleman, would lead me to question the authenticity of this letter, were it not for the consideration, that Lord Grenville's neglect to disclaim it, would, if it were really a fabrication, subject his Lordship to the charge of a culpable contempt of public opinion, which it would be presumptuous to impute to him.\* Compelled, therefore, to receive it, as the genuine production of his Lordship's pen, it becomes a duty to expose the weakness, and fallacy, of the position which it contains.

It is perfectly clear from this letter, that the *only* obstacle which Lord Grenville and his friends considered as insurmountable to an union with Mr. Pitt, was the King's objection to Mr. Fox, as a Member of the Cabinet. Respect for the Sovereign, rising paramount to all delicacy or forbearance towards any of his subjects, renders it necessary to call the reader's attention to the probable grounds on which that

\* I have found, upon inquiry, that the authenticity of this letter was never doubted by any of Mr. Pitt's friends.



objection was founded. It must be remembered, then, that Mr. Fox had declared himself an enthusiastic admirer of the French revolution, which produced the murder of the King, the abolition of the aristocracy, and a general system of oppression and plunder;—that, through the various stages of that revolution, he pertinaciously adhered to his original opinion, and uniformly derided the notion of danger to a foreign state, from the infusion of those principles which had effected the destruction of the French monarchy.—When these principles had made considerable progress in this country, when all the sound part of the community were alarmed at the rapid progress of disaffection, and when seditious societies, in every quarter, threatened to overthrow the venerable fabric of the British Constitution, Mr. Fox, though a word of discouragement from his mouth in the Senate would have silenced the voice of treason, and have compelled jacobinism to retire within the inmost recesses of her den, not only forbore to utter that word, but all his speeches, in Parliament and elsewhere, were calculated to fan the flame of revolt, and to animate the agents of sedition. He systematically opposed every measure suggested by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, for stifling the rising spirit of anarchy, and for securing the Church and the



Throne against the attacks of their numerous and infuriated enemies. Every legislative attempt to check the progress of treason and sedition met, in Mr. Fox, with a most determined opponent. The war which Parliament, and the nation at large, had repeatedly proclaimed to be just and necessary, he uniformly pronounced to be unjust and unnecessary. And, lastly, when peace was concluded, he openly rejoiced at the event, *because* it was glorious to the *enemies of his country*! If such conduct, pursued systematically for the long term of seventeen years, did not supply as strong, as proper, as honourable, and as constitutional, an objection, as the mind of an Englishman can conceive, to the admission of Mr. Fox into the Cabinet, no conduct whatever, short of convicted delinquency, could constitute an adequate objection. But there is another important point involved in this question. The Constitution has, for the wisest purposes, vested exclusively in the Sovereign the right of choosing the servants of the Crown, without exception or restraint. That the right of *choice* includes the right of *rejection* it would be a waste of words to *prove* by argument. To call the latter right in question is to impeach the former, and to destroy one of the leading features of a monarchical government.



But it forms not one of the least extraordinary parts of this case, that Lord Grenville and his associates were members of that Cabinet by whose advice the King erased the name of Charles James Fox from the list of his Privy Counsellors; a mark of degradation never inflicted, but as the punishment, either of declared delinquency, or of imputed disaffection!—Mr. Fox had never recanted any of those principles, had never retracted any of those expressions, which had induced the members of the Cabinet to advise the infliction of this disgrace upon his head. If, then, it had been proposed to them, immediately after his exclusion from the Privy Council, to receive him as a member of the Cabinet, would they not have indignantly spurned such a proposal, and have regarded it as an insult to themselves? It is impossible to doubt, for a moment, that such would have been their conduct; for the same acts, on the part of Mr. Fox, which rendered him unfit to be a Privy Counsellor, must, *a fortiori*, have disqualified him for a seat in the Cabinet; and it is clear, that Mr. Fox stood, at this moment, in precisely the same situation, in respect of his merits or demerits, as at the period when he incurred the disgrace in question;—or rather, he now stood in a worse situation, since he had exhibited additional proofs of the same sentiments, additional instances of



the same misconduct, which had drawn upon him the signal mark of his Sovereign's displeasure. Here, then, Lord Grenville himself had acted upon that *principle of exclusion*, which he now considered as an insurmountable bar to his acceptance of office. His Lordship, too, it may be remarked, found no deficiency of "weight, talents, and character," in the administration of that day, from which not only Mr. Fox himself, but all his political friends, were excluded. The "public voice and sentiment" supported that administration, and there was not the smallest reason to believe, that they would not have given an equal support to a Cabinet composed of the same individuals, at the present moment. Nor, will it be contended that, perilous as the times unquestionably were, they were to be compared, for extent of danger, to the early periods of the revolutionary war, when hostilities abroad were less formidable than disaffection at home. Lord Grenville was not asked to associate with "weak and incapable" men; but with men whose strength and capacity he had long experienced, and uniformly acknowledged. The grounds, then, here urged by his Lordship, for his refusal to come into power, without Mr. Fox for his associate, are not to be supported by either arguments or facts.



It is worthy of remark, that Lord Grenville here expressly denied, that he was fettered by any engagement, either expressed or implied, to Mr. Fox, or to any other persons; and that he did not conceive himself bound to make any stipulations in favour of the Catholic claims, as the condition of his acceptance of office. It would have been a novel sight for the nation to behold an administration founded on the *latitudinarian* principle of admitting public men, *of all descriptions, and without any exception*. By the establishment of such a basis, public virtue would have been reduced to a level with public profligacy; loyalty and disaffection, patriotism and treason, would have been placed on the same footing, and the King might have boasted of a more motley cabinet than any to be found in the history of ancient or modern times. To suppose that Mr. Pitt had ever publicly acted upon, or privately admitted, as a rule of conduct, any such levelling principle as this, would be to admit a supposition at variance with the whole tenour of his public life. It was his wish, indeed, to form a strong and efficient administration; envy and political animosity were strangers to his bosom; and he would willingly have acted in the Cabinet, with Mr. Fox and his friends, had it been the pleasure of his Sovereign to receive them as his ser-



vants. But he never had acted for a moment, and never would have acted, on the strange notion of depriving himself of the privilege of objecting to any person of whatever description, who might be proposed as his associate in power. Lord Grenville's statement, then, was loose, indefinite, unguarded, and unwarrantable. Mr. Pitt's conduct, when out of power, was framed on no such opinion, but on a plain, simple, sense of duty; which led him to consider measures without reference to men; and to vote, upon every question, according to his conscience, without considering what description of men supported or opposed it.

Had the King yielded to the importunities of combined parties, at this important conjuncture, and suffered an administration to be formed agreeably to the wishes of Lord Grenville, it is pretty evident, that the united friends of his Lordship and Mr. Fox would have had a preponderating influence, and, indeed, a numerical majority, in the Cabinet. Whatever measures, therefore, they chose to propose, must, of course, have been adopted; or the administration must have been dissolved. Mr. Pitt, then, in respect of weight in the Ministry, would have been placed in as bad a situation as if he had met the overtures of Mr. Addington, in 1803, and become a part of that administration.



On the other hand, if Mr. Pitt had been as peremptory as Lord Grenville in imposing on his Sovereign a Minister in whom he could not confide, and to whom he had a strong and constitutional objection, the King would have been rendered a cypher in the State, the tool, the pageant, of an aristocratic party, in whose hands all the real power of the Monarchy would have been vested. But, happily for the country, Mr. Pitt knew his duty too well, and was too resolute in the discharge of it, to load the venerable head of his Sovereign with sorrow and disgrace. He obeyed the royal commands; and, by the twelfth of May, a new Ministry was formed, without the assistance of the friends either of Lord Grenville, or of Mr. Fox.

The *Cabinet* was composed of—Mr. Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Duke of Portland, President of the Council; Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor; Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Privy Seal; Lord Viscount Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty; Earl of Chatham, Master-General of the Ordnance; Lord Hawkesbury, Secretary of State for the Home Department; Lord Harrowby, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Earl Camden, Secretary of State for the Department of War, and the Colonies; Lord Castle-



reagh, President of the Board of Controul for the Affairs of India; and Lord Mulgrave, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. William Dundas was made Secretary at War; Mr. Canning, Treasurer of the Navy; Mr. George Rose and Lord Charles Somerset, Joint Paymasters of the Forces; the Duke of Montrose and Lord Charles Spencer, Joint Paymasters-General; Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Sturges Bourne, Secretaries of the Treasury; Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls; Mr. Perceval, Attorney-General; Sir Thomas Manners Sutton, Solicitor-General; Lord Hardwicke, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord Redesdale, Lord Chancellor; Sir Evan Nepean, Chief Secretary; and Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

When Mr. Pitt now resumed the reins of power, he had no very encouraging prospect before him, to animate his hopes, or to stimulate his exertions. At home, the army and navy, particularly the latter, were by no means in a situation which corresponded with the immense resources of the country, and with the general spirit with which they were appropriated to the public service. The regular army had not been increased to the extent necessary for hostile operations; while the most complete ignorance, and the most decided inca-



capacity, could not have left the navy in a worse state, in every respect, than that in which it was found by Mr. Pitt, on his return to office. The number of volunteers in the kingdom was, indeed, great; but they had been assembled without discrimination or judgment; and were destitute of those rules and regulations which are essential, not only to the preservation of discipline, but to the prevention of discord and anarchy. The evils resulting from this defect became daily more manifest and alarming; and it was evident that, without the adoption of some regular system, evil would flow from the very source of good.

Abroad, the colossal power of France struck the astonished eye on every side. Buonaparté assigned no bounds to his ambition; imposed no controul on his passions, prescribed no limits to his vengeance. As he appeared nearer to the authority and dignity of a Sovereign, he seemed resolved, if possible, to annihilate the sad relics of that unhappy race which had, for so many centuries, given Monarchs to France. The Duke D'Enghien, the worthy representative of the House of Condé, had, since the Continental peace, lived in retirement, at the town of Ettenheim, in the Electorate of Baden. In this neutral territory, the Corsican, who acknowledged no law, but that of force,



resolved to seize him ; for which purpose he sent General Caulincourt, his Aid-de-Camp, with a body of cavalry, who entered the Electorate, without ceremony, on the fifteenth of March, and, coming unawares upon the destined victim of the tyrant's rage, secured the Duke, and several of his friends, without difficulty, and even without opposition. The Duke was immediately conveyed to Strasburgh, and thence, without delay, and without any interval of repose, to Paris, where he was conducted to the same prison, the *Temple*, which had been the last scene of his Sovereign's miseries. He was not, however, permitted to remain here, or to take the smallest rest, but was hurried away to the castle of Vincennes, where he arrived on the twentieth of March ; and that same evening, exhausted with fatigue, he was dragged before his judges. A mock trial ensued, and the illustrious prisoner was found guilty of having borne arms against the French Republic, to which he owed no allegiance, and of having conspired to restore the French Monarchy, to which he was bound by every tie that is obligatory on the human mind. In the night, the Corsican's brother-in-law, Murat, (now the mock King of Naples) with four other General officers, among whom were his own brother, Louis Buonaparté, (the new Sovereign of Hol-



land) and Duroc, the Corsican's secretary, arrived at the Castle, under an appropriate escort of *Mamelucs*. The murderous deed was performed by the Consul's body guards. The Duke died, as he had lived, with the spirit of a Christian soldier. He expressed his satisfaction that his assassins were not Frenchmen, (they were Italians) as his wretched countrymen would have one crime less to answer for. And, Heaven knows! the black catalogue of *their* crimes needed no addition.

This act of wanton and needless barbarity rendered the unprincipled ruffian, by whom it was committed, an object of execration to the great mass of his new slaves; and, could any expedition have been directed, at this moment, with a view to afford assistance and protection to the discontented in France, there is reason to believe, that a very general insurrection might have been easily excited. But the military despot had such a powerful force at his command as to keep the people in that abject state of subjection which precludes all attempt at liberation, without the most powerful foreign assistance, and which, indeed, almost stifles the wish to obtain it. The effect which the murder of the Duke D'Enghien had upon the different potentates of Europe was such as to shew the wretched situation to which most of them



were reduced. Russia and Sweden, indeed, evinced a spirit which would have done credit to better times; their remonstrances were strong, pointed, and decisive; they breathed the language of offended honour, and of wounded humanity. But they were addressed to a wretch to whose bosom humanity, honour, and remorse, were equally strangers. The correspondence which ensued displayed, on the part of the two Northern powers, a manly perseverance in the same honourable principles and conduct; and, on the part of France, a contempt of every thing that is magnanimous, noble, and decorous; fraud, duplicity, and falsehood, marked every communication which issued from the black Cabinet of St. Cloud.\* The appeal which the Emperor Alexander made, on this occasion, to the Princes of the German Empire, was received, with the solitary exception of the Elector of Hanover, in a way which bespoke their abject degradation, their miserable state of dependence on a foreign usurper. Prussia, who might again have proclaimed her-

\* Buonaparté did not blush, in Talleyrand's note to the Russian Minister, openly to charge the English with the assassination of the Emperor Paul; and, with the brazen effrontery, peculiar to the Corsican, he stated it as a notorious fact, which required no argument to prove, and no comment to explain.



self the champion of violated justice, evinced a determination to support the Corsican, in every act, however atrocious, unjust, or inhuman. The Elector of Baden, too, who, if he had had one spark of honour in his bosom, should have been the first to resent the violation of his territory, and the gross insult which he had thereby sustained, vied with the Prussian Monarch in professions of kindness and respect for the base assassin. Austria remained perfectly neutral and passive. Thus, for the present, Buonaparté had no opposition to dread on the Continent, although it was evident that the resentment of Russia only waited for a more favourable opportunity to break forth into open hostility. Encouraged by this state of things, the Consul proceeded to ascend the last step on the ladder of ambition. When all the previous preparations were made, addresses were presented to him, by the legislative and municipal bodies, and by the different armies, in the months of March, April, and May, (1804) beseeching him to become Emperor of the French. No extreme of baseness, in adulation, which the human mind can conceive, could exceed that by which these addresses were marked. A man stained with every crime, and whose hands were still reeking with the blood of an innocent and a virtuous Prince, was,



with the most astonishing contempt of decency and truth, held up as a model of virtue. The slaves, whom he ruled with a rod of iron, who trembled at his nod, and who held him in execration, were represented as happy under his mild and free government, and as ardently desirous to perpetuate his reign. When the public had thus been apprized of the Consul's intentions, a decree was finally passed, by the Senate, on the eighteenth of May, which abolished the Constitution which the Senators and Consuls themselves had so recently sworn to observe and maintain inviolate, declared Napoleone Buonaparté Emperor of the French, and the imperial dignity hereditary in the family of this upstart foreigner. The new Emperor then addressed an impious letter to his bishops, in which he ascribed his elevation to Providence, and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung, in all the churches, on the glorious occasion. The bishops kept pace, in their adulation, with the military and civil bodies, and framed new prayers adapted to the new order of things; while, to crown the whole, and to render, as it were, religion herself the handmaid to usurpation, the Pope was ordered to attend the ceremony of the coronation, and, with his own hands, to place the crown on the sacrilegious head of the usurper. This ceremony, which put the seal



to the degradation of France, took place on the nineteenth of November, in the cathedral of Notre Dame, at Paris, the same church in which, with more zeal, the senseless Parisians had, a few years before, worshipped a naked prostitute, as the goddess of reason, in obedience to the command of Buonaparté's friend and predecessor, Maximilien Robespierre. The aged Pontiff thus disgraced the character which he bore, and the religion which he professed, by administering "the holy unction" to an impious usurper, and by dignifying an impenitent murderer with the title of his "beloved son, in Jesus Christ!!!"

Mr. Pitt's attention was first directed to the increase of the military force, with a view to a co-operation with any of the Continental powers, who might be induced to make another effort for the emancipation of Europe from the tyranny of France; and next, to an endeavour to ascertain the intentions of the principal powers of the North, and to confirm those intentions, should they be found to correspond with the enlarged views of the British Cabinet. On the fifth of June, he introduced a bill for the creation of an additional force, by compelling every parish in the kingdom to supply, according to their respective population, a certain number of men, towards an army of



reserve, destined to recruit the regular army, which, by this means, Mr. Pitt supposed, would receive an annual supply of 12,000 men. This scheme met with considerable opposition, in all its stages, and was ultimately carried by a small majority.

It was evident, however, that the opposition given to this bill was not, exclusively, influenced by the objections which its opponents held, either to its principle, or to its provisions, much less to a concurrence in any other plan which might constitute a fit substitute, or adequately provide for the defence of the country. It was natural, indeed, that, on such a subject, great difference of opinion should prevail, and that many should prefer, from conviction, one means of providing for the national defence to another. But, in the present case, the personal friends of Mr. Addington, with that gentleman at their head, independently of such objections, could not but feel a strong desire to prove the inferiority of the proposed plan to that suggested by the late Minister; nor could they be expected to wish success to the measures of one, by whose efforts, principally, they had lost their own situations. The members of the Grenville party were also stimulated by the pangs of disappointed ambition; while the keenest resentment sharpened



the opposition of the *excluded* adherents of Mr. Fox. The operation of these various motives was too visible in the course of the debates in Parliament, on the bill in question, to escape notice. Indeed, in the discussion of June 18th, when the bill passed through one of its stages, the spirit of party appeared, without the smallest attempt at concealment or reserve; and raged with such violence, that Mr. Sheridan devoted the greater part of a long speech, on the motion for reading the amendments to the additional force bill, to a comparison between the merits of the late, and those of the present, Ministry; to a farsical description of the latter; and to an unqualified panegyric on Mr. Fox. Indeed, he did not hesitate to declare, that these litigations of party, that this contemptible struggle for place and power, were “of infinitely more importance” than the bill itself, which went to provide adequate means of defence for the country, at a season of considerable danger.\* There were many circumstances, by which this discussion was marked, most disgraceful to the character of *that* House of Commons; and eminently calculated to deprive it of the esteem, respect, and confidence,

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates for 1804, June 18th, p. 729.



of all serious friends to the Constitution of the country. On the fifteenth of June, the Opposition, at an early period of the day, found themselves in greater numbers than the Ministerial side of the House, when they had recourse to a party-manceuvre, which might have been regarded as a masterly display of skill in the revelries of a tavern meeting; but which, when performed by the representatives of a great nation, attached disgrace to their proceedings. To Mr. Grey the honour of this splendid triumph belonged. Aware of his temporary advantage, he suddenly pressed the question for the second reading of the amendments, and carried a majority of *six* against it. The evil which such a stratagem was calculated to promote was, however, rendered harmless, by a subsequent discussion on the same day, when Mr. Grey's motion for postponing the second reading of the amendments, for three months, was rejected, and Mr. Ryder's amendment for substituting "Monday next," for three months, was carried by 214 against 185. During the debate, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, feeling that indignation which no one, who was desirous of supporting the dignity of the British Senate, could fail to experience, truly represented, that the proceeding of Mr. Grey "*would be considered by the*



*country as disgraceful and contemptible.*"\* The Speaker, however, decided that, by the application of such epithets to any proceedings of that House, he had been highly disorderly.— Yet, three days after, when Mr. Sheridan termed the majority of the House, on a recent division, "a *small, miserable, and pitiful* majority, such as no minister could think an honour to him;"† and represented the conduct of a portion of that House, as "mean, shabby, and unbecoming,"‡ the Speaker did not feel himself called upon to pronounce such language to be disorderly or improper.

In the opposition to this measure, were evidently united all the persons who wished to dispossess Mr. Pitt of his place, or, at least, to produce a radical change in the Ministry; and this wish had a greater influence on the votes of many, than, perhaps, they were disposed to acknowledge, even to themselves. Mr. Sheridan, having praised the conduct of Mr. Addington in resigning when he had only a small majority in his favour, inferred the necessity of Mr. Pitt's resignation, because he had carried this measure by a majority nearly

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates for 1804, June 15th, p. 693.

† Idem. Ibid. p. 731.

‡ Idem. Ibid.



as small ; as if the merits of an administration were to be appreciated by a single measure, respecting which there were probably as many different opinions, as there were leading Members in the House. This politician wilfully overlooked the ruling cause of Mr. Addington's resignation ;—namely, the evident weakness of his general system of government, and the want of confidence which it necessarily engendered.

Mr. Pitt, in answer to this singular remark of Mr. Sheridan's, pertinently observed, that, broad as the hint might be, it was not broad enough for him to take it. He was yet sanguine enough to believe the bill would pass ; if it should not, all he had to lament was, that the country would be deprived of the increased means of security, which, he flattered himself, he had provided for it. Should he be disappointed in that respect, it must not be supposed that he should consider his disappointment as a defeat. He should merely treat it as the decision of the House on the dry merits of the bill. If this scheme should be rejected, another project, which, he trusted, would be less objectionable, should be submitted, and the *hint* should not be taken, until he found his attempts to promote the public security utterly nugatory and ineffectual ; then he should retire,



not with mortification, but with triumph, confident of having exerted his best endeavours to serve his country. Mr. Pitt said, he would not discuss how far a wider basis for the formation of his Majesty's government would have evinced the wisdom of the Sovereign; but he should not think the prerogative entire, if they were permitted thus to deliberate on its exercise, so far as to examine the propriety or impolicy of inviting a principal person on the opposite bench to participate in the public councils of the State. Thus to interfere would be to alter the constitution of the land, which, although free, was yet monarchical; and, for the preservation of its liberties and immunities, all its parts should be protected from violation.

This was true constitutional language, and evidently proved, that Mr. Pitt had formed a much more accurate idea of the principles of the Constitution, and of the duties of a subject and of a Minister, than either of those parties, who, though they differed, radically, on every *fundamental principle of government*, and on every *essential point of policy*, now wonderfully agreed in opposing his administration.\*

\* Great pains were taken at this period, both by speeches in Parliament, and through the medium of the press, to justify a coalition of men, who had differed on points of the highest



During the Parliamentary recess of 1804, Mr. Pitt was sedulously employed in cementing a good understanding, and in strengthening the connection which subsisted, between this country and the Court of St. Petersburg. And his success, in this instance, was so complete, that the foundation was laid for a new confederacy against France, as soon as a favourable opportunity should occur for carrying it into effect.

In the mean time, the state of Ireland called for no small portion of the Minister's atten-

importance to the prosperity of the State, and not unessential to its existence as an independent monarchical community. It was represented to be the duty of every honest man\* "rather to conciliate unanimity, than to inflame differences; rather to bury, than to revive, the recollection of former animosities." As an abstract position, and as applicable to the ordinary contentions of party, and to the common struggles of their respective leaders, it might be admitted without danger; but, applied, as it then was, to the circumstances attending the appointment of the present administration, it was fallacious, weak, and untenable. *Political morality* sustained a severe shock, by the memorable coalitions between Lord North and Mr. Fox, which excited the resentment of the most numerous, and the most honest, part of the community; and a subsequent coalition, formed upon the very principle advanced on this occasion, inflicted on it a still more fatal blow; and violently shook, if it did not absolutely destroy, that confidence in public men, which constitutes the firmest support of a government.

\* See Lord Grenville's speech on the 15th of February, 1805.



tion. The flames of rebellion, though stifled for a time, had never been completely subdued; and the lurking spirit of discontent incessantly threatened to break out into open revolt.— Even the conciliatory conduct of Lord Hardwicke, which received the praises of all those who had palliated the enormities of 1798, and who always ascribed the turbulent disposition of the natives to the oppressive measures of the government; which had been even applauded by the Papists themselves; did not secure the Viceroy from an attempt to subvert his power, to attack his person, and to overthrow the government. On the twenty-third of July, 1803, a body of insurgents, under the conduct of Robert Emmett, (whose brother had been deeply engaged in the Rebellion of 1798) flew to arms, murdered the Lord Chief Justice Kilwarden, and Colonel Brown, in the streets of Dublin; and for some hours spread consternation and dismay through a capital, which contained a sufficient number of troops to annihilate them in an instant. To whatever cause it was owing, whether to want of information, to excess of confidence, or to culpable neglect, certain it is, that those precautions were not adopted by the government, which would have sufficed to prevent this dreadful outrage, or, at least, to crush the insurrection at its birth.



As it was, the shops and houses of the metropolis were shut up, in the middle of the day; the inhabitants were in a state of horrid alarm, dreading a renewal of the murderous scenes of 1798; the officers of the Volunteers and Yeomanry were intercepted as they repaired to their respective quarters; and it seemed, that nothing was wanting but prudence in the chiefs, and subordination in the followers, to take not only the capital, but the castle, the seat of government, by surprize! Fortunately, however, for the public, though unfortunately for individuals, the insurgents passed the whole day in useless acts of licentious violence, and in the murder of such officers as appeared in the streets. At length, two parties of the 21st regiment, of fifty men each, under the command of two subalterns, lieutenants Brady and Douglas, having been attacked by the rebels, commenced hostilities against them, and, in a few minutes, compelled them to fly. Their leaders then effected their escape, and the insurgents retired to their homes. Emmett, and others of the chief conspirators, were soon after apprehended, tried, and executed.

But though this rash attempt was thus speedily defeated, discontent still continued to prevail, and it had been deemed expedient, and indeed necessary, to suspend the operation of the



Habeas Corpus act in that country. The Papists, too, had appointed a committee to act in the capital, for the purpose of framing a petition to Parliament for their admission to a full share of political power with Protestants. They had also, at this time, and had continued to have, ever since the last rebellion, an accredited agent at Paris! The committee in question had been suffered to hold its meetings regularly, not only without the smallest interruption from the Viceroy, who certainly had no right to interrupt them, but in frequent communication with the government, and with its perfect approbation. But the loyal efforts of the Protestant Corporation of Dublin to counteract these mischievous efforts of the Papists, (for they could have no other than a mischievous tendency, at such a period, and under existing circumstances) strange to say! were not viewed by the Viceroy with the same complacency. For a meeting of the Corporation having been convened in Dublin, in the spring of 1805, at which certain resolutions, expressive of the danger to the Constitution,\* which must result

\* The following were the resolutions proposed by Mr. Giffard, and adopted by the meeting, with only three dissentient voices. 1. "That we have seen, with astonishment and sorrow, a copy of a petition lately presented to Parliament, in the name of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and con-



from an admission of the Catholic claims, on the motion of Mr. Giffard, that gentleman was immediately dismissed, by Lord Hardwicke, from an office of trust in the customs, the duties of which he had conscientiously discharged for the long term of two and twenty years. The acknowledged cause of this dismissal was Mr. Giffard's conduct in proposing the resolutions in question; the Viceroy declaring his taining demands of political power, which, if yielded, must be ruinous to our happy constitution in Church and State.

2. "That the time and manner of making these demands, while the horrors of the last ten years are still fresh in our recollection, are ungracious and improper; and must necessarily produce *the most dangerous irritation in the public mind*.

3. "That a petition be presented to each House of Parliament, in opposition to the demands of the Roman Catholics of Ireland."

If a *Popish* Viceroy had censured such resolutions, his conduct would have been natural;—but the conduct of a Protestant governor, in punishing the person who proposed them, was an act of political suicide. The corporation asserted their own rights with appropriate energy, and, in the following resolutions, passed on the 4th of May, very aptly characterized the proceeding of the Viceroy. 1. "That it is the undoubted right of every subject of this realm to petition any branch of the legislature." 2. "That, to injure any subject for the exercise of his right, is oppressive." 3. "That we have heard, with strong feelings of regret, that a member of this assembly has been deprived of an office which he held for twenty-two years under the Crown, for having exercised this right in his corporate capacity.



wish to conciliate all parties, and to prevent all discussions upon religious subjects! Such a punishment, (accompanied by such an admission) for the exercise of a constitutional right, for the discharge of a sacred duty, is, happily, without a precedent in the annals of party; and if it were not a gross *abuse* of power, it was certainly a most unwarrantable exercise of it.

It was not to be supposed, that while France was herself at war with this country, she would suffer her vassals and tributary states to remain at peace, unless, by so remaining, they could contribute more essentially to the gratification of her ambition, and to the promotion of her views, than by fighting her battles in the field. Spain was one of these states; she still reserved, indeed, the name of an independent nation, but she had lost every distinguishing characteristic of independence. France, by the treaty of Saint Ildefonso, and by subsequent conventions, had bound Spain so firmly to herself, that Buonaparté's will was as absolute at Madrid as it was at Paris; and he found in *the Prince of Peace*, a Minister as obsequious as the apostate Talleyrand himself. Spain had contracted the obligation to supply him, in any war in which he might chuse to embark, whether offensive or defensive, aggressive or



conservative, a certain number of ships and men, to be increased at his pleasure, so as, in fact, to include the whole military and naval force of the kingdom. The Corsican, however, found it his interest to receive money instead of military succours, and he accordingly stipulated, by a subsequent convention, for a monthly payment, the amount of which was not exactly ascertained, though it was known to be considerable. By this means Spain was more useful to him, than if she had been at war; since, her vessels, being in no danger of capture, could bring home her treasures in safety, to enable France to continue the war against this country; and she could supply France with the produce of her colonies, of which she stood very much in need.

The British Ministry had long complained of this arrangement, which bore every feature, and many of the effects, of decided hostility. Evasive answers were given to their remonstrances; but, at length, the continued armaments in the Spanish ports, the march of French seamen through Spain to man the ships, and other certain indications of warlike preparations, induced Mr. Pitt to insist on a categorical answer from the Spanish court; and to issue orders for preventing the ships of Spain from



leaving her harbours ; and to detain any vessels coming with treasure from Spanish settlements in South America. In consequence of these orders, Captain Moore, who commanded a squadron of frigates off the coast of Spain, took three vessels from the Rio de la Plata, richly laden, on the 5th of October (1804); a fourth blew up, during the action; for the Spanish commander refused to be detained, unless by force. But though hostilities were thus begun, no exertions were left untried, to induce the Spanish Cabinet to depart from the aggressive system of policy which it had adopted, in obedience to the mandates of France. These efforts, unhappily, proved unavailing, and a formal declaration of war was issued on the 24th of January, 1805.

[1805.] All the papers relating to the dispute with Spain were immediately laid before Parliament, and became the subject of a lengthened discussion, continued for two days, the 11th and 12th of February. Mr. Pitt entered into a long and luminous explanation, and defence, of the conduct of the British government; which was, however, severely reprobated by Mr. Grey; who considered the language and conduct of the Cabinet, in the first instance, (during Mr. Addington's administration) as too tame, irresolute, and indecisive;



and, at last, after Mr. Pitt came into power, as too precipitate and too violent. He moved various resolutions conformable with these sentiments. A long discussion ensued, in which much learning was displayed, in explaining and applying the law of nations, as laid down by Vattel and others, and in which much special pleading was applied to the purpose of perverting the obvious meaning of the plainest passages referred to in support of opposite conclusions. Mr. Windham, Dr. Lawrence, Mr. Fox, and Lord Temple, joined in censuring the conduct of Ministers, while it was ably defended by Lord Castlereagh, Sir John Nicholls, the Master of the Rolls, and again, by Mr. Pitt himself, who made a masterly reply to all the arguments which had been advanced in support of Mr. Grey's amendment; which, on a division, was rejected by 313 votes against 106.

The Opposition to Mr. Pitt seemed now to have acquired a systematic form, and men, who had hitherto differed on all the essentials of civil government, united in order to dispossess him of that situation in which many of them had repeatedly avowed their ardent wishes to see him placed; and to reduce their Sovereign to the necessity of accepting such an administration as an aristocratic party should chuse to impose upon him. The defence of the country,



which had already undergone so ample a discussion, was a subject on which it was conceived all the supporters of the late Ministry might be brought to concur with the present motley Opposition. The experiment was accordingly made, by Mr. Sheridan, who, on the sixth of March moved for a repeal of the additional force act. He displayed, on this, as on all other questions, his usual talent for wit and pleasantry, for joke and repartee, which he always introduced, whether the subjects were serious or light, grave or ludicrous. Mr. Pitt, in allusion to this faculty, observed, "He seldom condescends to favour us with a display of his extraordinary powers of imagination and of fancy; but when he does come forward, we are prepared for a grand performance. No subject comes amiss to him, however remote from the question before the House. All that his fancy suggests at the time, or that he has collected from others; all that he can utter in the ebullition of the moment; all that he has slept on and matured, are combined and produced for our entertainment. All his hoarded repartees—all his matured jests—the full contents of his common-place book—all his severe invectives—all his bold, hardy assertions—all that he has been treasuring up for days and months, he collects into one mass, which he kindles



into a blaze of eloquence, and out it comes altogether, whether it has any relation to the subject of debate or not." Among the "bold, hardy, assertions," to which Mr. Sheridan had recourse on the present occasion, was, that *Mr. Pitt was known to have given a pledge to the Catholics of Ireland, on his abandonment of office.* After the ample explanations which have been entered into upon that subject, it becomes a work of supererogation to observe, that this assertion was wholly destitute of truth; and that there was not even a shadow of foundation to support it. Mr. Sheridan, however, was foiled in his political tactics; for, although he had displayed some judgment in his choice of a topic, his motion was rejected by a majority of *one hundred and forty.*

Another means adopted for harassing the Minister, was the petition from the Papists of Ireland, which was taken into consideration, by the Lords, on the 10th, and in the Commons, on the 13th and 14th of May, when it underwent the longest and most elaborate discussion which it had hitherto experienced in England. It is impossible to consider this petition in any other light, than as intended to embarrass the government, and, as calculated, though certainly not intended by some who supported it, to excite an odium against the Crown. For it



was well known that his Majesty entertained a decided opinion that he could not, consistently with his coronation oath, give his sanction to a measure which, he conscientiously believed, would endanger the Established Church. The discussion, therefore, at this moment, could answer no good purpose. If, contrary to all probability, it had succeeded in Parliament, the King, no doubt, would have put his veto upon it, and have dissolved the Parliament. The consequences of such a measure it is needless to pourtray. Its principal supporters, in the Lords, were Lord Grenville, by whom the petition was introduced, Lords Spencer, Ormond, Holland, Longford, Hutchinson, Darnly, and King; and its most strenuous opposers, the Duke of Cumberland, the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Lord Chancellor; Lords Redesdale, Ellenborough, Bolton, Auckland, Limerick, Hawkesbury, and Buckinghamshire.

Lord Grenville, and others, having drawn a melancholy picture of the state of the Irish Catholics, who, according to them, were exposed to persecution, an Irish nobleman, Lord Limerick, could not refrain from declaring, that, from these poetical descriptions, he had been almost led to imagine, that he had passed the greater part of his life in a dream; that Ireland, where he was born, and where he resided so



many years, was not the kind of country he had considered it to be, and that all that had there passed before his eyes was merely a vision. He corrected Lord Grenville's assertion, that the Catholics of Ireland had suffered from party-violence, and party-prejudice; and truly stated, that, from the year 1782, the records of the Irish Parliament exhibited one continued chain of indulgences, relaxations, grants of privileges, and admission of political rights, "till, at last, little indeed was left to bestow." His Lordship made some pertinent remarks on the symptoms of party-spirit evident in the selection of two *Englishmen*, to present a petition from the *Irish* Catholics, as if there were no *Irishmen* in both Houses on whom they could rely. In answer to Lord Grenville's observation, that this was the fittest time to present such a petition, and that he esteemed that moment the happiest of his life, in which he had become the advocate of Catholic claims, the Earl of Limerick said, "I differ here from the noble Lord; our opinions are far as the poles asunder. What, my Lords, this the fittest time to agitate a question which rouses every passion, and calls into action every civil and religious prejudice; this the fittest time, when the united kingdom is assailed on all sides, by the most formidable enemies, and when, at the



moment in which I am speaking, French emissaries are traversing Ireland in every direction, announcing an immediate invasion of that island, and promising to those who shall join them the establishment of their religion, and the property of those lands which they now hold as farmers? But the noble Lord says, that any evils that may arise will be imputable to those who reject the petition, not to those who bring it forward; that greater evils would have arisen from a refusal to present the petition, than any that can flow from an agitation of the subject; and that the Catholics eagerly called for its presentation. I lament that I must again differ from the noble Baron; I have some knowledge of that country, and, from every information which I have been able to obtain, I decidedly assert, *that the Catholics were not anxious to agitate the subject now*; that they did not think the time opportune; or that they were now likely to obtain their objects. If my information is accurate, I believe it will be found, that all the eagerness to agitate the subject was on this side of the water; and that *the Catholics were goaded on by representations from hence to bring forward their petition*. Lord Limerick fully exempted Lord Grenville from any imputation of a wish to promote anarchy, but expressed his firm belief, that there were



men "so desperate as to value as nought a general convulsion, if they could worry a Minister, by bringing forward a subject, in the discussion of which they conceived he might be embarrassed by former declarations." His Lordship then burst out into a pathetic apostrophe to his country, which he stated to be the chosen arena on which political gladiators, and contending parties, struggled for victory.\* At the close of his speech, Lord Limerick directed the attention of the House to a part of the subject which, in the course of these discussions, appears to have been almost wholly overlooked. He reminded them, that the Catholic body were not the only description of persons whose feelings and interests were to be consulted upon this occasion. The Irish Protestants demanded, at least, equal regard. He believed, they were almost all adverse to the concession proposed. He entreated the House to respect the feelings of that body, who were ever true to their religion, faithful to their King, and enthusiastically attached to the British Constitution. "Descended from yourselves," said his Lordship, "in

\* "See Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates," (May 10th, 1805, p. 723) which contains a more full and accurate report of all the speeches on this important question, than is to be found in any other collection.



fighting valiantly their own battles, they have served your interests, and have prevented, by their exertions, that fair and beautiful island from being torn from the British empire. In seeking new friends, whom possibly you may fail to conciliate, neglect not your old ones, but remain firm to those who have, in the worst of times, remained firm to you!" This admonition was salutary, and the House acknowledged its force. After the debate had been continued through two days, Lord Grenville's motion, for referring the petition to a committee, was rejected by the decisive majority of ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE, only forty-nine having voted in favour of it, and one hundred and seventy-eight against it.

In the Commons, Mr. Fox stood forward as the advocate of the Papists, and manifested his usual zeal and ability in their defence. He was opposed by Dr. Duigenan, who displayed a profound knowledge of the subject, and demonstrated the danger of compliance with the prayer of the petition, by an explanation of the pernicious tenets of the Romish Church, which were equally obligatory on modern as on ancient Papists. He affirmed, that the great majority of the Irish Parliament would never have agreed to an incorporating Union with Great Britain, if any hint had been given, or



any suspicion entertained, that the present measure would be attempted, after an Union had taken place. He called on the persons concerned, on the part of government, in conducting the business of the Union in the Irish Commons to deny this fact, if they could. And he averred, for himself, that, instead of warmly supporting the measure of an Union in the Irish Parliament, he would have opposed it to the utmost of his power, had he suspected that such a measure as the present would have been introduced into the Imperial Parliament, in the event of an Union; and he knew many members of the Imperial House of Commons who would have decidedly opposed it, had they had any suspicion of such a consequence resulting from it; in short, a great majority of the Irish Commons would have done so. One principal argument made use of by all the agents of government to the Irish members, to induce them to agree to an Union was, that all hostility of the British Cabinet to Irish Protestants, and all further encouragement and support of Irish Romanists, would for ever cease, on an Union between the two countries taking place, because all inducement to such a system of policy would then for ever cease. "Could any British subject," pursued the Doctor, "ever suspect that, in the reign of a Prince of the House of Brunswick,



a measure would be proposed in a British Parliament, the attempt to adopt which cost the unhappy James II. his crown, expatriated him and his posterity, and caused a breach in the hereditary succession of our kings, always a serious evil in an hereditary monarchy? Astonishing, that what our kings could not even attempt with impunity, should be, after a lapse of one century, daringly attempted; and that, too, under the reign of a Prince, whose sole title to the crown rests on a principle directly adverse and opposite to the principle of this measure!"\*

Dr. Duigenan was answered by Mr. Grattan, in an eloquent and animated speech, uninflated by any of that inflammable matter which distinguished most of his popular orations in his native country, but replete with the same perversion of historical facts, and exhibiting much of the same flimsy sophistry. Mr. Perceval and Mr. Alexander replied to Mr. Grattan. Mr. William Smith, an Unitarian himself, consis-

\* Cobbett's Debates, May 13, p. 890, 891. As Dr. Duigenan's statement, respecting the conduct of government in promoting the Union, remained uncontradicted by any of those to whom he appealed, it is to be presumed that it was perfectly correct. If so, the promoters of the Union, if guilty of any breach of faith, broke their faith with the Irish Protestants, and certainly not with the Irish Romanists.



tently enough, declared his enmity to tests. Sir William Scott opposed the motion, and Dr. Lawrence supported it. The latter defended a Popish Bishop, Dr. Milner, (who has lately written in defence of a modern miracle, performed at St. Winifred's Well, in Wales, on the person of a poor Papist,\*) from the attacks of the Attorney-General, who had quoted a passage, from a tract, written by the Prelate, about four years before, entitled, "The Case of Conscience solved, or Catholic Emancipation, *proved* to be compatible with the Coronation Oath;" in which he stated, "that every human law, and every promise, or other engagement, however confirmed by oath, must necessarily turn upon the cardinal virtue of prudence, which implies that it depends, as to the obligation of fulfilling it, on such and such circumstances, upon the question of expediency." This statement Dr. Lawrence did not hesitate to adopt. Considering, however, this as an abstract proposition, it is most false in itself, and most mischievous in its consequences. An oath is a compact, as it were, between man and his Creator; and it is not for any human

\* This Bishop claims, for the members of his own church, the exclusive privilege of obtaining miracles in their favour! A wonderful instance of christian humility!



power, much less, for the individual himself, to absolve him from the observance of it, under the specious pretexts of worldly prudence or expediency. It might well suit the policy of the Church of Rome, who aimed at acquiring an absolute ascendancy over the minds and actions of her bigotted votaries, to represent all oaths as conditional ; because, where any doubt arose, as to the expediency of fulfilling them, she knew that the reference must be made to herself ; and that it would afford her an additional means of extending her power, and of rivetting the chains of her slaves. This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of a subject which involves some of the most important considerations that can engage the attention, or affect the lasting interests, of man. But, even with the exceptions and qualifications which the Romish casuist introduced, and on which the learned Doctor descanted with equal confidence and delight, the doctrine is most objectionable. One of the cases in which a positive oath is to be subjected to this rule of expediency, is, “ when the object obstructs any good evidently greater.” Now, who is to be the judge of the comparative degree of good to result from the observance of an oath, and from the commission of perjury ? Either the Church of Rome, who usurps the power of absolution from oaths, and



who has generally limited her exercise of it to cases in which her own interest would suffer from an observance of them; or the interested individual himself? In either case, the objections to this lax system of morality are insuperable. If a man shall once accustom himself to believe, that an oath is not, of necessity, binding, he will, very soon, reduce it to the condition of a common promise, either to be kept or violated, as interest, passion, or caprice, may suggest. Away with such scholastic sophistry, such jesuitical morality, which renders divine obligations subservient to human passions, and makes man the judge, as it were, between himself and his Creator. If a doubt be once raised about the obligatory nature of an oath, by what tie can man be bound in cases in which his interest and his duty are placed in opposition to each other? What security can the rights and property, the lives and liberties, of individuals receive, if an oath be considered, not as a religious obligation, but as a kind of loose engagement, which *prudence* or *expediency* may dissolve?—There was, however, nothing out of character, in the conduct of a Popish Prelate, who, belonging to a Church which had assumed the power of absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance, asserted the privilege of absolving



a King from that oath, in virtue of which he commanded the allegiance of his subjects !

Mr. Foster, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, placed the question in a very plain and clear point of view. He stated the real situation of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, which had been represented as slavish and degraded, to be this—"They are as free as the Protestant, in the acquisition, in the enjoyment, and in the disposal, of property of every species ; they can purchase land, settle their estates, and enjoy all the profits of commercial industry equally with him ; they possess every benefit of civil liberty as fully as any other subjects. What, then, is the object of their petition ?—Political power only." Mr. Foster made several judicious observations on the strange inconsistency of a Protestant King with a Popish Council ; a Protestant Church, with Popish legislators ! And he shewed the weakness of the argument, deduced from the circumstance of Neckar and Sully having been prime Ministers in Catholic France ;—*they*, he observed, did not acknowledge the authority of a foreign power, which a Catholic does ;—a Popish state might safely trust a Protestant at the helm ; for he acknowledges his supremacy ; but a Protestant nation could not, with the same security, take a Catholic, who denied



it. Besides, the examples were faulty in another respect. Sully's master was bred a Protestant, and only conformed to the established religion in appearance, to humour the prejudices of his subjects; a complacency, however, which did not secure him from the bigot's poniard. Of Necker it is only necessary to state, that he ruined France!

Mr. Pitt, on this occasion, pursued the same line of argument which he had adopted, when the question had been formerly discussed. He denied any *right*, on the part of the Romanists, to a participation of political power, and he considered the question solely on the ground of *expediency*. He stated his opinion to be, that, previous to the Union, in no possible case could the privileges so demanded be given, consistently with a due regard to the Protestant interest in Ireland, to the internal tranquillity of that kingdom, the frame and structure of our Constitution, or the probability of the permanent connection of Ireland with this country. He admitted that, after the Union, he saw the subject in a different light; and was of opinion that, under an united Parliament, these privileges might be granted, with proper guards and conditions, so as not to produce any danger to the Established Church, or to the Protestant Constitution. He still retained the same opi-



nion, and still thought, if, from other circumstances, there were no objection to a compliance with the demands of the Catholics; and if by a wish they could be carried into effect, that the introduction of a certain proportion of Catholics into the Imperial Parliament would not be likely to produce any influence or effect detrimental or injurious to the welfare of the State, or to the safety and security of the Constitution.

But in declaring this opinion, Mr. Pitt did not mean to shut his eyes against the conviction, that a Catholic, however honourable his intentions might be, must feel anxious to advance the interests of his religion; it was in the very nature of man; he might disclaim and renounce that wish for a time, but there was no man, who was at all acquainted with the operations of the human heart, who did not know, that the Catholic must feel that anxiety, whenever the power and the opportunity might be favourable to him. Neither did he mean to say, that the Catholics were not engaged in the scenes preceding the rebellion of 1798; nor yet to deny, though jacobin principles were the foundation of the rebellion, that the influence of the priests, themselves tainted with those principles, might have aggravated the evil, though they were not the cause of it. But



Mr. Pitt expected to avert all danger by the adoption of his proposed measures of caution and security. He stated his idea to be, not to apply tests to the religious tenets of the Catholics, but tests applicable to what was the source and foundation of the evil, to render the priests, instead of making them the instruments of poisoning the minds of the people, dependent in some sort upon the government, and thus links, as it were, between the government and the people.\*

By this declaration it would appear, that Mr. Pitt meant to bind those by interest whom he could not restrain by principle,—in other words, to bribe the priests to make the people loyal and peaceable;—or, rather, to make it their interest to discharge their duty, and to take care that their flocks followed their example, in good, as they had done in evil! But he never thought that it would be wise or prudent to throw down, rudely or abruptly, the guards and fences of the Constitution; yet he did think, that, if the system to which he had alluded had been deemed proper for adoption, it ought to have been accompanied with those checks and guards, and with every regulation, which could have given additional respect and influence to the Established Church, to the support and

\* See the collection of Mr. Pitt's speeches. Vol. IV. p. 438.



protection of the Protestant interests, and to the encouragement of every measure that could tend to propagate and spread the example of the Protestant religion.

But, in order to render such a measure effective, Mr. Pitt deemed a general concurrence of the community indispensably requisite. He meant it as a measure of peace and conciliation, which it could never be, unless it could gratify the wishes of one party, without awakening the fears, or exciting the jealousy, of the other. He saw no appearance of such concurrence, at present, and, therefore, he thought that the discussion of the question could only tend to revive those dissensions which he wished to extinguish; to reproduce all that warmth and acrimony of discussion which had heretofore prevailed; and to excite those hopes which, if they were to be disappointed, might be productive of the greatest mischief. As to the chance of carrying the point at present, with general concurrence, of gratifying the Catholics without offending the Protestants, of confirming the affections of the one, without raising the suspicions and exciting the fears of the other, not only in Ireland but in England, he confessed there appeared to him to be none. He lamented, as much as any man, that the impression which now prevailed had taken place; many circum-



stances had combined to produce it, all of which were to be deplored. "I ask any gentleman," said Mr. Pitt, "whether he does not believe, looking to the opinions of the members of the Established Church, of the nobility, of the men of property, of the middling and respectable classes of society—I ask him, whether he does not believe, looking at the sentiments of the mass of the Protestants of this country and of Ireland, that there is the greatest repugnance to this measure, and that, even if it could now be carried, so far from producing conciliation and union, it would tend, on the contrary, to disappoint all the prospects of advantage, which, under other circumstances, might be derived from it? Even those gentlemen, who have argued most strongly in favour of this measure, have candidly confessed that, in the present state of men's minds, it is not likely to be carried. I am sure I shall not be contradicted when I say that, ever since the Union, this subject has, in a very considerable degree, attracted public attention, and that of late, notwithstanding the other events which have occupied the public mind, it has been the subject of much conversation, both in public and private, particularly since the Catholic petition has been presented, and since the honourable gentleman has given notice of his present



motion; and I should disguise my real sentiments, if I did not say that, at present, the prevailing sentiment is strongly against this measure:—what circumstances may occur to overcome that sentiment, it is not for me to predict or conjecture.”

In the course of the discussion, Sir George Hill, pursuing the spirit of Mr. Pitt's opinion, but delivering his sentiments in language more plain and direct, questioned the sincerity of the persons who brought forward the measure at this period, and pronounced it “*a mere party-trick.*” He maintained that Mr. Fox knew full well, that obstacles insurmountable stood in the way of its success; that the Minister, after consulting the highest authority, and the judgment of the most experienced men around him, deemed it expedient to decline bringing it forward himself, and advised that it should not now be offered to Parliament. The leading and best-disposed Catholics themselves were believed to have holden the same sentiments as to the propriety of forbearing to press their claims for the present;—“but,” said he, “I charge the Opposition, aided by the democratic part of the Catholics, with having overruled this determination, and forced forward the discussion.”\*

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, May 14, 1805. P. 1010.



In answer to Mr. Fox's observation, that the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the breach of the promise which he had made to the Catholics, produced the rebellion of 1798, Sir George Hill remarked, that, in making such an assertion, he pronounced, on Mr. Grattan, the most bitter, heart-rending judgment, that could have fallen from the lips of a friend; for he thereby charged him with being the author of that rebellion. "I do positively," said he, "in proof of this assert, and defy contradiction, that Lord Fitzwilliam was sent to Ireland with an instruction from the Cabinet of England, to keep back the Catholic claims; and further assert, that no authorised promise was made to them." He then proceeded to shew, that the Viceroy having acted contrary to his instructions, and Mr. Grattan having, in concert with his Excellency, urged forward the Catholic claims, Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled; and, therefore, if the rebellion were, as Mr. Fox asserted, the consequence of his recal, Mr. Grattan was certainly the author of it. The petition was ultimately rejected by 336 votes against 124, leaving a majority of 212.

On the 14th of June, Mr. Whitbread brought forward a subject of complaint against Mr. Pitt, for having sanctioned the advance of £40,000, in the autumn of 1796, by Lord



Melville, to the house of Boyd and Benfield, for the purpose of enabling them to make good their instalments on the loan for which they had contracted, and which had fallen so as to bear a discount of six per cent. The resolutions stated, that sufficient security was given for the payment of the money so advanced; and that it was actually repaid; and it was not pretended that any public loss or injury whatever had been sustained by the transaction. But it was censured as irregular, and deprecated as a precedent. Mr. Pitt justified himself to the perfect satisfaction of the House, and proved that he had no other motive for his conduct, on the occasion, than a wish to support public credit. The resolutions of Mr. Whitbread were accordingly rejected without a division, and, on the motion of Mr. Lascelles, it was "resolved, that the measure of advancing forty thousand pounds to Messrs. Boyd and Co. upon unquestionable securities, which have been regularly discharged, was adopted for the purpose of averting consequences which might have proved highly injurious to the financial and commercial interests of the country; and, although not conformable to law, appeared at the time to be called for by the peculiar exigencies of public affairs!" A bill of indemnity, for this transaction, was



afterwards brought in by Mr. Lascelles, and passed into a law.

Every effort of the opposition to tarnish the reputation of Mr. Pitt, to diminish the confidence which the nation reposed in him, or to lessen the majorities which supported him in Parliament, having proved abortive, recourse was now had to a measure which, it was hoped, would weaken his administration, by depriving him of the powerful assistance which he derived from the talents, the knowledge, and the experience, of Lord Viscount Melville, who now presided, with distinguished ability, over the important department of the navy. His Lordship had incurred the resentment of the Whig party, in a peculiar manner, by exposing the shameful inactivity of that Board, which had the Earl of St. Vincent for its president; in a debate which took place on the 24th of May, 1805, in consequence of a motion made by the Earl of Darnley, in the House of Lords, for a committee of inquiry into the state of the navy, the manifest object of which was to vindicate the character of Earl St. Vincent, at the expence not only of the character of Lord Melville, but of the characters of all preceding First Lords of the Admiralty, Lord St. Vincent's system being peculiar to himself, and differing, of course, from all the systems observed before,



as well as after, his administration. In his introductory speech, Lord Darnley, alluding to the sixth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, pointedly condemned "the criminal and atrocious instances of negligence, profusion, waste, and peculation, it exhibited."—And he arraigned, in the strongest terms of reproach, all those who had presumed to question the knowledge and capacity of Earl St. Vincent, whose friend he proclaimed himself, and who "had been termed, by some authority too, the greatest enemy the country ever saw." \*

In his answer, Lord Melville took a succinct view of the state of the navy, in all its departments, at the time of his entrance into office; and proved, by authentic documents, that there were then in commission eighty-one ships of the line, of which thirty-seven might, probably, last five years, twenty-seven three years, and seventeen considered as fit only for home or limited service. But the return, on which this statement was founded, appeared to have been more favourable than correct; for, although, in the ten months after Lord Melville had entered upon the duties of his office, ten

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, May 24th, 1805, p. 81.



or eleven additional ships of the line had been put in commission, they did not increase the number of effective ships, as they only sufficed to replace those which had been put out of commission in consequence of being unfit for further service. On the 15th of May, 1804, there were only six ships of the line building, one of which was laid down in 1802, another in January, 1803, a third in November, 1803, a fourth in 1802, and two which had been laid down so far back as the year 1792. Of these six ships, three were *expected* to be finished in 1803, one in 1806, and another in 1807. From this statement it became evident, that the *vigilant*, and *active*, and *able* administration of Earl St. Vincent had, from February, 1801, to May, 1804, ordered five ships of the line to be built in the King's yards, and two in the merchants' yards. But when inquiry was made into the state of the ships, so ordered to be built in the King's yards, it was found that not even the keel of any one of them had been laid down; and the reason assigned for this delay was, that the ships could not be proceeded on without more materials, and more hands.\* The report made to the Admiralty, respecting

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, May 24th, 1805, p. 82.



the state of the two ships in the merchants' yards, was merely that they were building, without stating what progress had been made. A remedy was applied, by Lord Melville, to this alarming evil, by having immediate recourse to the merchants' yards, in imitation of Lord Sandwich, Lord Keppel, Lord Howe, Lord Chatham, and Lord Spencer. Such was the success attending Lord Melville's exertions, that he was enabled to state to the House, on the day of this debate, from papers submitted to their Lordships, that measures had been taken, by which no less than twenty-six ships of the line were to be added to the strength of the fleet before the month of September, 1805. This addition, with seven ships still in the merchants' yards, and two new ships to be launched at Deptford and Woolwich, would make the whole force amount, then, in ships of the line, to near one hundred and twenty sail, a force not only adequate to our wants at home, but sufficiently numerous to guard our foreign possessions also.\* Lord St. Vincent said but little in reply, but he maintained the

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, May 24th, 1805, p. 94. This speech of Lord Melville is replete with curious and interesting matter ; and it affords the best means of ascertaining the comparative merits of the two naval administrations, that of his Lordship, and that of his predecessor.



practicability of building *ten* ships of the line *annually*, in the King's yards; and, seemed to assign the scanty provision of timber as the reason for not having had *one* built during the three years that he was in power.\* As to the personal attack on himself, which he conceived Lord Melville to have made, he said, he should treat it with the contempt which it deserved. The House rejected the motion for the inquiry, by a majority of fifty-five, *eighty-eight* having voted against it, and *thirty-three* for it.

The commissioners of naval inquiry, adverted to in the course of this debate, were appointed, during the naval administration of Lord St. Vincent, chiefly at his suggestion, and, of course, were men not adverse to his Lordship's system, principles, and conduct. Sir Charles Pole, the constant friend and advocate of his Lordship, was placed at the head of the commission; the other members were Mr. Evan Law, Mr. John Ford, Mr. Henry Nicholls, and Mr. William Mackworth Praed. On the 13th of February, these commissioners published their tenth report on the office of Treasurer of the Navy, which was made the subject of inquiry in the House of Commons, and, ulti-

\* Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, May 24, 1805, p. 98.



mately, the ground of an impeachment of Lord Viscount Melville, for high crimes and misdemeanours, in the execution of his office of Treasurer of the Navy.

With regard to the merits of this case, it is sufficient to know that, after the fullest investigation, Lord Melville was acquitted of every one of the charges which had been preferred against him by the House of Commons: But the previous proceedings against this nobleman are of so extraordinary a nature, and they affect, so deeply, some of the most valuable rights of Englishmen—rights, the security of which is the main scope of the British Constitution, that it would be unpardonable in the historian of the period in which they occurred, to pass them over without observation.

The most striking feature of the case is, that Lord Melville, who was acquitted by the highest Court of Judicature in the kingdom, of every one of the charges, which the most astute ingenuity could find any pretext for preferring against him, for misconduct and malversation in his office of Treasurer of the Navy, had been previously pronounced, by the House of Commons, guilty of very gross misconduct in that office.

This proceeding took place on the 8th of April, 1805, when Mr. Whitbread moved a



string of resolutions, one of which (the 11th) was couched in the following words:—"That the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melville having been privy to, and connived at, the withdrawing from the Bank of England, for purposes of private interest or emolument, sums issued to him as Treasurer of the Navy, and placed to his account in the Bank, according to the provisions of the 25th Geo. 3. c. 31, has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty."

The resolutions, of which the foregoing formed a part, were carried by a majority of one. The effect of this proceeding was most severely penal. Of all the things that are most estimable in social life, the most estimable, beyond all comparison, is A GOOD NAME! With the jewel reputation, what is there, however highly prized, that can, in point of value, enter into competition? compared with this, life itself, though accompanied with all the other advantages that can render it desirable, dwindles into utter insignificance. Nay, without this jewel, life becomes, to a mind properly formed, one of the heaviest burdens which it can fall to the lot of humanity to support. The vote of the House of Commons had the effect of instantaneously fixing a stain on the



reputation of Lord Melville, which even his subsequent acquittal by the House of Lords has been unable entirely to remove. It exposed him to the finger of scorn, from one end of the empire to the other. It excited the public indignation against him in a degree, perhaps, unequalled in this country. Nay, what is worst of all, with the exception of a discerning few, it deeply injured him in the opinion even of the candid and impartial part of the nation, who, forgetting that he had not been tried, could not believe it possible for the House of Commons to pass such a resolution against a man who was not guilty of the charge therein contained. And although, happily for Lord Melville, his Lordship has since been brought regularly to his trial, and acquitted, by his Peers, of all the articles of impeachment exhibited against him, one of which (the 3d) contained the precise charge, of which the House of Commons had assumed that he was guilty;—“that of being privy to, and conniving at, the application of monies withdrawn from the Bank of England” to “purposes of private advantage, or interest, profit, and emolument;” on which assumption the House had declared, “that he was guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty;”—although such an acquittal has been the result of a full and deliberate



investigation of the case, on a partial view of which the House of Commons so precipitately decided,—still the prejudice which has been excited against his Lordship, by the vote of that House, is not, and probably never will be, entirely done away.

There cannot be a stronger proof of the effect here ascribed to this extraordinary proceeding, than the very remarkable circumstance that his Lordship, instead of being instantly restored, as it was reasonable to expect he would be, to all the offices before held by him under the Crown, has not, to this hour, been restored to the rank of Privy Counsellor to his Sovereign, from which, as well as from those offices, he was removed, because he was under accusation, or rather in consequence of the inculpatory resolutions of the House of Commons. Nor should it be forgotten, that the effect of that vote has operated most injuriously with regard to the public, by depriving it so long of the benefit of his Lordship's great and extraordinary abilities, as a member of administration. If the whole of the proceedings against him had consisted of his impeachment and acquittal, it can scarcely be doubted, that, at a period when a mind like his was so much wanted to assist in directing the weighty affairs of State, and, in some degree, to supply the



dreadful chasm which has been produced by the loss of the only Statesman whose mind was equal to such an emergency; it can scarcely be doubted that, in the case supposed, his Lordship would, instantly, upon his acquittal, have been restored to the Privy Council, and that he would, long ere this, have filled a very high department in administration. It is the stigma which was fixed upon him by the House of Commons, that has prevented either of these events from taking place, though it cannot escape observation, that the vote of that House could not have so operated, without the co-operation of those, whose duty it was to advise the restoration of Lord Melville, at least to that station of honour and usefulness from which he was removed, only in consequence of, as the result has proved, a condemnation as unjust as it was irregular.

These consequences, cruel beyond description, as they affect Lord Melville, and, inexpressibly injurious, as they affect the State, were, it should be remembered, the result of a single vote of the House of Commons;—a vote hastily passed at the close of an intemperate discussion, and in the production of which party feelings had, at least, a considerable share. Indeed, the connexion which the question, on that occasion, had with the great ob-



ject of party,—the removal of the existing administration,—was clearly disclosed, by Mr. Fox, immediately after the passing of the resolutions. That gentleman, eager to pursue the triumph, and to involve Ministers in the fate of Lord Melville, opposed the postponement, for a few days, of a motion of Mr. Whitbread, for an address to his Majesty, to remove Lord Melville from his councils; and he exclaimed, rather unguardedly, it must be owned, that he could not consent to a proposition which would leave to the House the chance of meeting again, without having taken any step *to remove a DISGRACED administration.*

But the part of this case, which is most deserving of consideration, is the circumstance, that the condemnation of Lord Melville, by the House of Commons, took place in his Lordship's absence, without his being heard in his own defence, or having any opportunity afforded him of vindicating himself against the charge on which the resolution, containing that condemnation, was founded; and even without any evidence being called to the bar of the House to substantiate that charge. In this point of view, indeed, the case calls for the most serious consideration of every British subject, for it furnishes a precedent well calculated to excite the alarm of every one who has any regard for



the British constitution. Of all the privileges enjoyed under that constitution, the most valuable is the security which it affords to every individual, of whatever rank or station, that he shall not be found guilty of any charge without a hearing,—that is, *without a fair and impartial trial.*

This privilege is even more valuable than the protection which the constitution affords to all who live under it, against every kind of despotism on the part of government. For the instances in which individuals are liable to be sensibly injured by a despotic use of the powers of government are few, and of rare occurrence; and they are scarcely ever to be found in the private walks of life. But every individual, at all times, wants the protection, which can be afforded only by a fair and an impartial administration of justice. Indeed, where justice is well administered, the powers of government, though despotic in their form, and free from other necessary checks, are subject to so efficient a controul, that they can seldom be exercised for the purpose of individual oppression. To secure this, its favourite object, an impartial administration of justice, the constitution has made it an essential principle of its judicial polity, that no person shall be condemned unheard. Trial by jury, which



is also a grand mean for the attainment of the same end, as being most admirably calculated to ensure to the accused a fair trial, is, in various instances of minor delinquency, dispensed with. But the principle that the accused shall be heard before he can be condemned, admits of no dispensation, no exception, no qualification. It can in no instance be departed from without a violation of the constitution. This principle is, indeed, so obviously deducible from the first rudiments of universal justice, that any judicial code, which should fail to recognize it, would be radically defective.—But it is peculiar to the British constitution to give full effect to this principle, which it professes to hold sacred and inviolable.

It is, however, undeniable that, in the case of Lord Melville, the above principle was violated. In that case, an accused individual was condemned unheard.—Lord Melville was pronounced, by the House of Commons, to be guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty, without a hearing,—without a trial,—without being called upon, in any way, to answer the charges on which so severe a sentence was founded,—without being even informed that such charges were preferred against him.

It will hardly be pretended, that the opè-



ration of the principle in question is confined to the ordinary administration of justice, and that the House of Commons has a constitutional right to dispense with it, by proceeding to condemnation without a hearing of the party accused, or without affording him any opportunity for self-defence. If this be the case, then is the principle itself a mere cypher. For its value depends upon the universality of its operation, in the security which it affords to all persons under all possible circumstances, and against every possible species of power, whether regal, aristocratical, democratical, or judicial. If, in any case, it be inadequate to afford protection, then is there no effectual bulwark secured to the dearest liberties, to the most sacred rights, of the subject.

But of all the powers and authorities in the state, there is no one in which an exemption from the obligation of this principle would involve so gross a violation of the constitution, or be fraught with so much danger to the right and liberties of the subject, as the House of Commons. That House which superintends all inferior jurisdictions, is itself amenable to no jurisdiction whatever. It is the sole judge of its own proceedings, which are, therefore, superior to controul, and against which, though productive of the grossest injustice, there is no



redress. It is also a democratical body, a popular assembly, and, consequently, liable to that sudden effervescence of passion, to which such bodies and assemblies are particularly exposed, and which, indeed, is one of their characteristic qualities. It is, further, the great scene of party-contention, and party-feelings are apt to mix themselves, more or less, with all its proceedings. But the influence to which the House of Commons is subject from without, particularly disqualifies it for an absolute and unqualified exercise of judicial powers. Its members, such of them, at least, as are returned by means of popular election, are constantly looking forward to the period when they shall again solicit the suffrages of their constituents. To ensure those suffrages they will ever feel a strong inducement to gratify popular feelings; and every one, who is at all acquainted with human nature, must know, that the readiest way to produce that effect is, to display an eagerness to detect abuses, and to hold forth the persons, who are but even suspected of them, to public indignation. Whenever, therefore, an individual is charged with any species of delinquency, which is calculated to agitate the public mind—ever ready to condemn without proof—the House of Commons is the very last place in the world in which he is likely to



enjoy the advantage of a fair trial. Such a person is there exposed, and, unless a seat happens to afford him an opportunity of self-defence, absent, and defenceless, to all the violence of popular feeling,—perhaps to all the bitterness of party-resentment, eager to avenge exertions which may have merited the gratitude of the country.—While Ministers, with all their weight and influence, may be unable to stem the torrent of prejudice and clamour, or may fear to lose, in the attempt, that popularity which is the prop and support of their power.

The constitution, it must be observed, is not chargeable with the anomaly of investing a body of men, so constituted, and so exposed to the very worst kind of influence, with judicial powers, except in the single instance of the election of its own members. The House of Commons is not to be found in any enumeration of the courts of justice known to this country. It does not even possess the power of applying an oath to the conscience of any individual, a power, the exercise of which is the main spring of the administration of justice. Powers of investigation it certainly possesses, and that to a very great extent; and such powers are essential to its grand function of accusation, by impeachment before the House of Lords. But it is clear that this function,



which is precisely analogous to that of a grand jury, authorizes it only to inquire and accuse, but not to condemn. And whenever, instead of confining itself to inquiry, with a view to impeachment, it proceeds, as in the case of Lord Melville, to convict, or which is, in effect, the same thing, to censure, it exceeds its province, and violates the constitution. The House of Commons has also the power of inquiring into abuses;—a power, which seems rather to have grown into usage, than to be founded in any settled, or original, principle, peculiarly applicable to the representatives of the people. But as the object of this power is the controul and correction of abuses, and the redress of grievances, it by no means authorizes the assumption of judicial functions, and it should never be allowed to trench upon the administration of justice, criminal or civil. It is of the utmost importance that all authorities, of whatever nature, should, in practice, keep within the bounds prescribed to them by the constitution. No despotism is so hostile to liberty as that of indefinite power. And such power is infinitely more to be dreaded in a popular assembly, than in a monarch. The Commons should, therefore, take care lest they be tempted, by their freedom from restraint, and their exemption from responsibility, to con-



sider themselves as judges in the cases which may come before them in their inquisitorial character. They should remember that they cannot constitutionally pronounce either upon the guilt, or the civil rights, of any individual.— And if they suffer themselves to assume judicial functions, they will not only violate the constitution, but also invite so many applications to them, under the pretext of inquiry, that a function, which was given them to be exercised only on extraordinary occasions, will, by its perversion and abuse, encroach upon the ordinary duties, which are the main object of their institution; and, as has been said, by a writer too well known to be named,—*the medicine of the constitution will become its daily bread.*

But it has been said, that the sacred maxim of justice, so dear to the British constitution, was not violated in the case of Lord Melville; that his Lordship was not condemned unheard; that, on the contrary, he had a full hearing,—a fair opportunity of self-defence,—before the commissioners of naval inquiry, whose report was the ground-work of the censure passed upon him by the resolutions of the House of Commons. Is then this grand and fundamental maxim of universal justice, that no one should be condemned unheard, satisfied, if the



party be heard before one tribunal, and condemned by another? Rather is it not a mockery of justice so to construe that maxim, or to suppose it capable of any other meaning than, that the party must have a fair opportunity of meeting the charge, and those, by whom it is preferred, in the very tribunal in which it is to be decided; that he must there have every facility afforded him of convincing those who are to be his judges, that he ought not to be found guilty of what is alleged against him? In this sense, certainly Lord Melville had not a hearing.

The Romans seem to have had far more correct notions upon this subject than appear to prevail in our House of Commons. We are told, by high authority, that *it was not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before he, which was accused, had the accuser face to face, and had license to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.*—Acts xxv, 16. This was the nature of a hearing *de jure Romano*. But Lord Melville was consigned to the most cruel pangs of reproach and obloquy, far more painful than death itself, without being allowed to *face an accuser*, without *having license to answer for himself*, in the assembly by which he was pronounced to be guilty;



may, without being apprized that *any crime was laid against him.*

But the commissioners of naval enquiry were, in no respect, constituted a tribunal. They were not even a tribunal of accusation. They were appointed to *enquire and examine into irregularities, frauds, or abuses, in certain departments*, and this solely with a view to reform; for which purpose they were authorized *to report such observations as should occur to them for preventing such irregularities, frauds, and abuses, and for the better conducting and managing the business of such departments.* This was the object for the sake of which they were authorized to examine the persons who should be called before them. Can it be pretended, that a person examined, respecting his own conduct in office, before these commissioners, had a hearing, in any sense of the word in which it can be understood, for the purposes of individual justice, as affording the party accused an opportunity of exculpating himself from the accusation preferred against him? To say that he had such a hearing, because he had an opportunity of saying any thing he pleased in explanation of his conduct, is as gross a fallacy as can be employed to insult the human understanding. Had a party, so examined, any opportunity of hearing the evidence against him?



Could he subject that evidence to cross examination? Was he called upon to produce evidence, if any he had to produce, in his own behalf? Nay, had he any notice that he was on his trial? Had he any intimation given him that a charge was preferred, or was to be preferred, against him? Instead of all this, the whole of which is necessary, in this country at least, to constitute a trial, did not the examination of Lord Melville (which was the only proceeding previously to the vote of censure in which he had an opportunity of being heard) consist altogether of interrogatories on the part of the commissioners, and of answers thereto from the party under examination? Could it be supposed, that answers drawn forth in such a manner would afterwards be converted into matter of charge? Could a proceeding so glaringly incompatible, not only with British justice, but with every system and principle of justice, be apprehended? Could it be supposed that, in this country, a person would be thus inveigled and entrapped into self-accusation? Such, however, has been the course of proceeding in Lord Melville's case. The examinations, taken before commissioners, appointed solely for the reform of abuses, which examinations must, therefore, have been presumed by the parties subjected to them to have had no other object than such



reform, were made to furnish grounds of accusation against one of the parties.

But a still worse feature in that case presents itself to notice. The legislature, abhorrent from every approach towards a violation of the maxim, *nemo tenetur seipsum accusare*, endeavoured to provide against the possibility that any person, examined by the commissioners, should be drawn into any answer which might involve a crimination of himself. In the act, therefore, by which the commissioners were appointed, was a clause, authorizing all persons, examined before them, to decline answering any questions which might be put to them. In some instances, Lord Melville availed himself of this privilege, not because, by his answers to the questions proposed, he might criminate himself, but on grounds of a very different nature, and which he fully explained to the commissioners. That very circumstance was, however, turned against him; and the exercise of a right, which was expressly granted for the purpose of preserving persons in his situation from furnishing evidence against themselves, was not only made the means of exciting a strong prejudice against his Lordship, but was even converted into a presumption of his guilt, in that mock trial in the House of Com-



mons, which took place in his absence, and which terminated in his condemnation.

It is not meant to be here maintained, that discoveries of frauds, when produced by such examinations, should never be followed by the prosecution of the guilty parties. The interest of the State requires that public delinquency, however discovered, when the case is sufficiently gross, and capable of being brought home to the offender, should be subjected to condign punishment. But it is far better that such delinquency should escape with impunity, than that those principles, which form the very land-marks of the Constitution, should be trampled upon. Guilt, when detected, should be put into a regular course of investigation; incidental discoveries should be made the ground of further enquiry; and the party should be presumed to be innocent until found to be guilty, after a regular trial before the proper tribunal. But, let not any one be ensnared into an accusation of himself—let not that silence which the law allows, and even encourages, him to observe, as a preservative against all danger of this kind, be converted into a presumption of guilt; above all things, let him not be condemned without a hearing—that is, without a full opportunity of self-defence, against a formal and explicit charge duly and regularly preferred. To ensure all



this, let every proceeding, at all connected with the administration of justice, pass before the regularly constituted tribunals. No person should be judicially affected in his character or his rights, but in the regular course of justice. There cannot be a grosser abuse than for bodies of men, appointed for very different purposes, to assume censorial or judicial powers. When commissioners, or committees, nominated with a view to reform or economy, become the accusers of the persons whom, for the sake of obtaining those objects, they are obliged to examine, they not only step out of their province, but are guilty of the most unconstitutional abuse of the powers vested in them. Their censure is swallowed with such extreme avidity by the public, that it is scarcely possible to remove the prejudice thereby excited;—even an injurious insinuation, coming from such a quarter, and following what is fallaciously supposed to be a regular investigation, is sufficient to open the flood-gates of calumny upon the best characters, and to overwhelm the reputation of those who have not been legally proved to have done any thing deserving of reproach. It is, therefore, much to be feared, lest such commissioners and committees, perceiving how much their own popularity depends upon the quantum of abuse with which they can gra-



tify some of the worst passions of the public, may be tempted, by the pursuit of so fascinating an object, incautiously to sacrifice the credit and character of the individuals whose conduct and transactions are submitted to their investigation; and lest, in the ardour of such a pursuit, overlooking not only candour, but even truth and justice, they may, however pure their intentions, be insensibly drawn on from error to misrepresentation, and at length be guilty both of the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi*. To preserve them from the temptation of acting in such a manner, they should confine themselves to the objects for the sake of which they are instituted.

When such bodies employ the powers with which they are entrusted in an inquisitorial manner—when they convert the answers which they themselves have drawn from the individuals examined before them into grounds of inculpation, and thereby expose those individuals to public indignation, they are the occasion of far greater abuses than any which they are appointed to correct. They then become an inquisition of the very worst kind; one which extorts from persons whom the law presumes to be innocent, and who, probably, if regularly put upon their trial, would (like Lord Melville) prove to be so, not proofs, but presumptions, of guilt—pre-



sumptions, too, which, by such a course of proceeding, are made to have all the effects of proofs. Practices of this nature tend also to frustrate the very objects for which such bodies are instituted, and the attainment of which is of incalculable importance. Those objects, indeed, involve the best modes of reform. They secure the ends of punishment without its rigour. They operate by means of prevention, without the severity of example. But they can be attained only by a calm, patient, *undeviating* pursuit. If, however, instead of steadily adhering to such a course, the only one which affords a chance of success, boards of enquiry assume the character of inquisitors and accusers, they will render themselves odious and intolerable, they will forfeit the public confidence, and they will close those channels of information, through which alone they can hope to render any effectual service to the State. Such boards, acting in such a manner, may terrify, but they will not reform. They may harass, but they will not correct. And they will deprive the public of the service of men of real respectability, who would not chuse to be subjected to an investigation, before which the best character is no security, and innocence itself an ineffectual protection.

How far the foregoing observations are



exemplified in the case of Lord Melville, is a question which must be left to the decision of the intelligent reader. Certain it is, that, in that case, the resolution of the House of Commons of the time, pronouncing his Lordship guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty, was a violation of the first principles of justice, and of the most sacred maxims of the Constitution. Happily—may it not be said providentially?—the result displays, in the most striking and impressive manner, the danger of a departure from established forms. The nobleman, in whose instance those forms were sacrificed, and who was, in consequence, most deeply wounded in those feelings which are ever most acute in minds that are most susceptible of virtue and honour—feelings, the anguish of which, in such minds, renders even martyrdom an enviable lot;—this nobleman, upon a full and regular investigation of his case, was acquitted of all the charges preferred against him, and, in particular, of that very charge of which the House of Commons had assumed him to be guilty, and which that House made the foundation of a vote of censure, alike unjust, cruel, and unmerited.

Let it not, however, be supposed, that the mischief of such proceedings is confined to the individuals who immediately suffer from



them. They are inexpressibly injurious to the best interests of the State, and they tend ultimately to its subversion. All constituted authorities, however high, the Commons, as well as the Lords and the King, are morally bound to respect the principles of the Constitution; and this *moral* obligation is particularly binding upon the House of Commons, on account of its peculiar character and functions, as the grand bulwark of freedom, and defender of the rights of the subject, to which those principles are inseparably allied. Such, indeed, are the real value and importance of that House, so essential is it to the secure existence of genuine freedom, so necessary is it as a restraint upon power, and a check to corruption, that, to maintain its just privileges should be an object of the utmost solicitude to every lover of the Constitution. — But, if that House, availing itself of its high and uncontrollable powers, and of its irresponsible situation, should act arbitrarily and oppressively, and invade those rights of which it professes to be the vigilant defender, then would it give a mortal wound to that constitution which it was intended to preserve and to perpetuate; then would it prove, not the guardian, but the subverter—not the sanctuary, but the tomb, of liberty.

The conduct which Mr. Pitt observed, on



this trying occasion, when the object of prosecution was a nobleman endeared to him by long habits of friendship, the most sincere, the most ardent, and the most confidential; by congeniality of principle, and, in many respects, by similarity of disposition, as well as of pursuits, was most manly and most honourable. And, had his judicious advice been adopted, the House of Commons would have been spared the shame, and the disgrace, of condemning a man without a hearing, of punishing him without a trial, and of pronouncing a sentence, the injustice of which was proclaimed by the solemn decision of the first Court of Judicature in the kingdom. Mr. Pitt, on the 8th of April, proposed, “that a select committee be appointed to consider the tenth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, and the documents therewith connected; that they examine the same, and report their opinion thereon to the House.” This motion, however, or rather that which was preparatory to it, and which was the same thing in effect, was rejected; the numbers being equal for and against it, 216; and the Speaker’s casting vote having turned the balance against Lord Melville.\* Mr. Pitt, however, so far

\* By what kind of parliamentary casuistry, I know not, the Speaker was induced, it has been said, to give his vote against the Minister, in conformity to some *etiquette* or custom---



conformed to what he found to be the sense of a bare majority of the House of Commons, as to advise the King to erase the name of Lord Melville from the list of his privy counsellors; (Lord Melville having previously resigned his office of First Lord of the Admiralty) and had he lived to witness the acquittal of his Lordship, from all the charges, he would, no doubt, have felt it to be his imperative duty to advise his Majesty to restore Lord Melville to every situation and office which he held before his trial, because justice to the noble Lord's character required such a step, and because the interests of the State demanded it. On the 25th of June, the last discussion, upon this subject, took place, when it was proposed to substitute

Custom, in my opinion, "more honoured in the breach than in the observance;" at least, on the present occasion. As this was a *criminal* case, the resolutions being intended as the ground-work of the criminal proceeding which followed, I should have thought it more becoming the character and duty of the Speaker, as, indeed, of any member of the British Senate, then acting, in some respects, as a grand jury, to turn the scale, agreeably to a fixed principle of British jurisprudence, in favour of *mercy*. The Speaker could not have been actuated by a more laudable motive; and had he suffered it to influence his conduct, he would have spared the House all that self-reproach, which it would be a libel on its character not to believe it experienced, when it found that it had acted without proof, and contrary to fact.



the mode of proceeding by impeachment, to that before resolved on, by a criminal information by the Attorney-General. The proposal was resisted by Mr. Fox, and supported by Mr. Pitt; and it was carried by one hundred and sixty-six votes against one hundred and forty-three. This was the last discussion in which Mr. Pitt took a part.

In the debates on this question, the Addingtonian party, if that could be called a party which consisted of a small circle of Mr. Addington's friends and relatives, voted against Mr. Pitt. Mr. Addington himself had been created Viscount Sidmouth, at the commencement of the year 1805, preparatory to his introduction to office; and he immediately succeeded the Duke of Portland (who retired) as Lord President of the Council, while the Earl of Buckinghamshire received the Duchy of Lancaster, and some others of his friends were provided for. It is far from my intention to impute to Lord Sidmouth, in the part which he took in the prosecution of Lord Melville, any selfish motive, or any sinister intent. But certain it is, that, as soon as Lord Melville had resigned the situation of First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sidmouth made application to Mr. Pitt to appoint his friend, Lord Buckinghamshire, to that office. Mr. Pitt expressed himself with respect



towards the object of this application, but, not deeming Lord Buckinghamshire qualified for so important a situation, and having Lord Barham, a man of experience and knowledge, in his eye, sent a polite refusal to Lord Sidmouth. His Lordship, however, who appears to have entertained an high idea of his own consequence, after he became Premier, and had been again admitted to office, and who probably placed a very high value on his own services, resented this refusal, and actually sent in his own resignation, and that of Lord Buckinghamshire, which he desired Mr. Pitt to lay before the King. A little reflection, however, or some seasonable advice, soon convinced Lord Sidmouth of his error, and, in terms less haughty and more conciliatory, he requested permission of Mr. Pitt to recall the proffered resignations, and intreated him to consign what had passed to oblivion. With this request, that *good nature*, which Mr. Pitt possessed in an eminent degree, and which rendered resentment and enmity strangers to his bosom, induced him to yield a too-ready compliance. But it was not to be supposed that Lord Sidmouth, after such a transaction, would cordially co-operate with Mr. Pitt; and, indeed, he appears only to have courted a reconciliation for the purpose of leaving office with a better grace, and on a pretext



more likely to conciliate that popular favour, which he was always most anxious to court, and most sedulous to obtain. The difference of opinion between himself and Mr. Pitt, on the subject of Lord Melville's prosecution, afforded this pretext, though it cannot escape observation, that if that difference justified a resignation, it ought to have taken place, in the first instance; but, it is pretty well understood that Lord Sidmouth carefully concealed his opinion, and intention, from the Cabinet, and none were more surprized at the part which he took than the Ministers themselves. Be this as it may, Lord Sidmouth and Lord Buckinghamshire sent in their resignations again, on the 10th of July, when they were accepted, without hesitation or regret, and the former was succeeded by Earl Camden, and the latter by Lord Harrowby. There was not one of his political friends, perhaps, who afforded Mr. Pitt more reason to complain of his conduct than Lord Sidmouth. With the exception of some acts, at the commencement of his Lordship's administration, his conduct to Mr. Pitt, by whom he had been raised from private obscurity to public eminence, was marked by none of those features by which, on every account, it ought to have been strongly distinguished.

The domestic events of this summer were



by no means such as to assist Mr. Pitt in bearing up against the attacks of disease, with which he had long been assailed. For more than four years, he had laboured under all the inconveniences resulting from a weak stomach, and the consequent failure of appetite. And it will be easily conceived, that mental anxiety was peculiarly calculated to aggravate the effects of such a disorder. The gradual decline of his health could not have escaped the observation of his friends ; and, it is to be feared, that it was allowed to have an influence on the recent conduct of some of them. The discussion on Lord Melville's business, on the 25th of June, 1805, may be said to have closed his parliamentary life, as it was the last time he delivered his sentiments in the Senate.

The unprosperous state of affairs on the Continent tended to increase the anxiety of Mr. Pitt's mind. The continued encroachments of Buonaparté, who, not content with usurping the imperial dignity in France, had assumed the Crown of Italy, and annexed Genoa to his vast empire, had roused the spirits of the Austrians, and enabled Mr. Pitt to give life and vigour to a new confederacy against the colossal power of France. A treaty was concluded between Russia and England, to which Austria and Sweden soon acceded. The object of this



treaty was to restore, in some degree, the balance of power in Europe; by driving the French out of Hanover and the North of Germany; by establishing the independence of Holland and Switzerland; by restoring the King of Sardinia to his throne and territory; and by compelling the French to evacuate the kingdom of Naples, and the whole of Italy. The means by which it was proposed to accomplish this great and desirable object was, an army of half a million of effective men, independently of the forces to be employed by Great Britain herself. This treaty was signed at St. Petersburg, on the 11th of April. It developed a system of foreign policy, liberal, comprehensive, and grand. And had the Continental powers performed their part of the engagement, by supplying the stipulated force, there can be little doubt that the result would have been favourable to the independence of Europe. Providence, however, had otherwise determined. The campaign, which was opened late in September, proved short, disastrous, and decisive. The cowardly surrender of an Austrian army, at Ulm, by General Mack, paved the way for further successes; and the battle of Austerlitz, fought on the 2d of December, at which the Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the Corsican usurper, were present, com-



pleted the triumph of the French arms. The Austrian Emperor, dismayed by a loss, which he might easily, and soon, have repaired, solicited an immediate armistice, which was granted, the very night of the battle, on terms so disgraceful to himself, that his Imperial Ally, Alexander, refused to become a party to them. This was followed by the peace of Presburgh, signed on the 26th of December, which dissolved this new confederacy, and defeated the last hopes of Mr. Pitt. By that treaty Austria signed her own exclusion from Italy, and consented to an important loss of dominion in Germany. She sacrificed to her fears, her faithful subjects of the Tyrol and the Voralberg, who were consigned, much against their will, to the crowned vassal of Bavaria, as a reward for his desertion of the lawful head of the empire, and for his attachment to the general enemy of the civilized world.

France having, at the opening of the campaign, violated the neutral territory of Anspach, now belonging to Prussia, the Prussian Monarch exhibited some marks of resentment, which induced Mr. Pitt to send Lord Harrowby to Berlin, in the hope of persuading Frederick-William to join the confederacy against France. The vacillating policy of that Monarch defeated this attempt; and, while it deprived himself of



the only opportunity for restoring the fallen fortunes of Europe, by imposing an effectual check on the encroaching spirit of France, left to Mr. Pitt only the consciousness of having exerted every effort in *his* power to produce that effect.

Such exertions as depended, exclusively, on Great Britain, were eminently successful. In every quarter her fleets drove the enemy before them, and vindicated her right to rule,—the mistress of the sea. On the 21st of October, Lord Nelson sealed his glory with his life, at the memorable battle of Trafalgar, which inflicted a mortal blow on the navies of France and Spain. In the East, too, the British arms had been invariably successful, under the auspices of a nobleman, possessed of every quality of the heart and mind, which can impart wisdom to council, and energy to action;—a nobleman, who, during an arduous administration of seven years, extended the territory, enlarged the resources, and confirmed the security, of the British Empire; who, by wise and salutary regulations, adapted to the genius, the manners, and the habits, of the people, meliorated their condition, and opened to them the sources of comfort and happiness; who subdued, with apparent facility, difficulties, from which an ordinary mind would have shrunk with dismay;



who, amidst the bustle and anxieties of war, and the multiplied obstacles interposed by ignorant and interested opponents, erected a noble establishment, for the advancement of religious, scientific, and literary knowledge; and who, by his whole conduct, justified the opinion which Mr. Pitt entertained of him, and the confidence which he reposed in him.\*

Mr. Pitt's health experienced a rapid decline, in the autumn of 1805; and he was recommended to go to Bath, having, in a former illness, derived great benefit from the waters of that place, which, it was hoped, might still have a beneficial influence on a frame now reduced almost to the last stage of debility. He accordingly went thither in December.—Soon after his arrival he had a fit of the gout; and thought himself better for a short time. But the gout appeared again during his stay at Bath; and he never afterwards recovered even a moderate degree of strength. His appetite almost entirely failed; and, it being deemed

\* It is to be lamented that a complete history of the Marquis Wellesley's administration has not been given to the public, as a faithful record of his actions, while Governor-general of India, would supply the best answer to the numerous aspersions which have been cast on the public character of a nobleman, who may justly be considered as the *first Statesman* of the present day.



improper for him to drink the waters, he left Bath, and was in such a debilitated state, that he was four days on the road to Putney, at which place he arrived, on the 11th of January, accompanied by Sir Walter Farquhar, his medical attendant.

When a consultation was held the next day, with Dr. Baillie and Dr. Reynolds, they told the Bishop of Lincoln, who had repaired to Putney, that they saw no danger, no disease, but great weakness, in consequence of the gout, and they thought he might recover in a few weeks. They stated the necessity of *quiet*; but the approaching meeting of Parliament, and the state of Mr. Pitt's affairs, were such as to leave him little prospect of enjoying it.

Mr. Pitt felt better on the Sunday; and on the Monday morning he took an airing in his coach; but, in the evening, Lord Castlereagh and Lord Hawkesbury, having obtained permission from the physicians to see him, entered upon some points of public business, probably relating to the dissolution of the new confederacy, by the peace of Presburgh, (which had been concluded about three weeks before) which visibly agitated and affected him. Mr. Pitt, after this interview, observed, that, during the conversation, he felt some sensation in his stomach which, he feared, it might be



difficult to remove. On Tuesday, the 14th, Mr. Pitt again went out in his carriage, for the *last* time. His strength was manifestly diminished. On his return, he saw his brother, Lord Chatham; and on Wednesday, the 15th, Mr. Rose was admitted to him for a few minutes, and was very much stricken by his emaciated appearance. He was able to take but very little nourishment; his powers of digestion were greatly impaired; and scarcely any thing would remain on his stomach. He seldom spoke, and displayed an anxiety to follow the directions of the physicians, "to be as quiet as possible, and completely to divest his mind of all public business." He desired the Bishop of Lincoln, who remained with him, from the period of his return from Bath to the day of his death, to open all his letters, and to communicate only such parts of them as he should consider it necessary for him to know.

On the 17th, the physicians admitted, that Mr. Pitt was much weaker, but still maintained that there were no unfavourable symptoms.—At the same time, they declared their opinion, that he would not be able to attend to business in less time than *two months*, and expressed a doubt of his ability to take an *active* part, in the House of Commons, during the winter.



The Bishop of Lincoln was, naturally, very urgent with the physicians to allow him to apprise Mr. Pitt of the probable duration of his confinement, in order that he might decide on the propriety of resigning, or of retaining, his office. But the physicians were unanimously, and decidedly, of opinion, that nothing should be said to their patient on the subject. Mr. Pitt daily grew worse; and on Monday, the 20th, the physicians declared, "the symptoms were unpromising, and his situation was hazardous." In the evening of that day, he became much worse; and his mind, as is usual in cases of extreme debility, occasionally wandered.—Sir Walter Farquhar passed the night by his bed-side, and, at four o'clock, on Wednesday morning, he called up the Bishop of Lincoln, telling him he was much alarmed, and could now no longer object to any communication which the Bishop might think proper to make to him. The Bishop, who appears never to have entertained those hopes which the medical attendants encouraged, had continually pressed the physicians to permit him to intimate to Mr. Pitt that his situation was *precarious*, in order that he might receive his instructions, respecting his affairs and papers, and call his attention to religious duties; but they had constantly affirmed, that they saw



*no danger*, and could not sanction any proceeding which might create agitation of mind; as such agitation might be productive of serious mischief.

The Bishop immediately went to Mr. Pitt's bed-side, and told him he found it to be his duty to inform him, that his situation was considered as precarious, and requested his leave to read prayers to him, and to administer the Sacrament. Mr. Pitt looked earnestly at the Bishop for a few moments, and then, with perfect composure, turned his head to Sir Walter Farquhar, who stood on the other side of the bed, and slowly said,—“How long do you think I have to live?” The physician answered, he could not say, and expressed a faint hope of his recovery. A half smile on Mr. Pitt's countenance shewed that he placed this language to its true account. In answer to the Bishop's request to pray with him, Mr. Pitt said,—“I fear I have, like too many other men, neglected prayer too much to have any ground for hope, that it can be efficacious on a *death-bed*—but,”—rising as he spoke, and clasping his hands with the utmost fervour and devotion,—“I throw myself *entirely*” (the last word being pronounced with a strong emphasis) “upon the *mercy* of God, *through the merits of Christ!*” The Bishop assured him, that the frame of his



mind, at this awful moment, was exactly such as might, reasonably, be expected, to render prayer acceptable and useful.

The Bishop then read prayers, and Mr. Pitt joined in them, with calm and humble piety. He repeatedly expressed, *in the strongest manner*, his sense of his own unworthiness to appear in the presence of God; disclaiming all ideas of merit, but with a conscience evidently clear and undisturbed. He appealed to the Bishop's knowledge of the steadiness of his religious principles, and said, it had *ever* been his *wish* and *endeavour* to act *rightly*; and to fulfil his duty to God and to the world; but that he was very sensible of many errors and failures. He declared that he was perfectly resigned to the will of God; that he felt no enmity towards any one; but died in peace with all mankind; and expressed his hope, at once *humble* and *confident*, of eternal happiness through the intercession of his Redeemer.

Mr. Pitt desired that the settlement of his affairs and papers might be left to his brother and the Bishop of Lincoln. Adverting to his family, he said,—“ I wish a thousand, or fifteen hundred, a year to be given to my nieces—if the public should think my long services deserving it; but I do not presume to think that I have *earned it*.” He expressed great concern



about Lady Hester and Mr. Stanhope, but his anxiety, on their account, seemed to be abated by the recollection that they had a *father*. He attempted to give some written directions respecting the disposal of his papers; but, finding himself unable to write legibly, he resigned the pen to the Bishop, who wrote what Mr. Pitt dictated. Mr. Pitt afterwards read what was written, and signed the different papers, in the presence of Sir Walter Farquhar, and of several of his servants, who had remained in the room a part of the time in which Mr. Pitt was engaged in religious duties, and heard this great and good man profess the faith, and hope, and charity, of an humbly pious Christian.

Mr. Pitt was much exhausted by these exertions, and very soon grew much worse. About two o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon, he suffered much for some time, and seemed to struggle for breath. He then fell into a kind of stupor; but remained sensible almost to the last. About a quarter past four on Thursday morning, the twenty-third of January, 1806,—the anniversary of that day on which, five and twenty years before, he had first become a member of the British Senate,—he breathed his last, without struggle, and without pain. He was then in his forty-seventh year.



In attempting to delineate the character of Mr. Pitt, so shortly after the public has been deprived of the benefit of his eminent talents, and while so many persons are living, who, in the important political questions of the day, ranged themselves either on his side, or on that of his great opponent, it is highly probable that, while, on the one hand, I may not satisfy his most zealous partizans, and his most ardent admirers, I may, on the other, far exceed, in approbation and praise, every thing which his political adversaries are willing to admit.

It is, indeed, a matter of no small difficulty, to disconnect entirely our estimate of the talents of the leaders of political parties, from our favour or hostility to the measures which they adopt. We often admire great abilities, as much for the cause in which they are engaged,—and, in truth, it is the *application* of talents that can alone justify rational admiration,—as for any powers of the human mind, which may be displayed in the support of it; and it is not always easy to discriminate accurately by which of these considerations our judgment is regulated.

The House of Commons was, perhaps, at no period, more completely divided in opinion, than during the lives of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox.



The partisans of each naturally exalted the talents of their leader; but, while their respective friends were disputing which shone most conspicuous in every debate, each of these eminent men did the most ample justice to the powers of his rival. In making this observation, however, it is necessary to state, that it applies only to the last twelve or fourteen years of Mr. Pitt's life, for it is well known that, in the early part of his political career, Mr. Fox was inclined very much to undervalue his abilities, and to impute to arrogance and presumption that confidence which he afterwards admitted to rest upon the most solid and substantial grounds.

As a Statesman, the resources, as well as the firmness, of Mr. Pitt's mind, have been amply demonstrated by the measures which he adopted, to meet the various, and unforeseen, difficulties with which this nation was surrounded, during the period of his administration. Abroad, he had to struggle with the most gigantic power, which ever raised itself in opposition to the greatness of his country; while, at home, he had to support, at the same time, commercial and national credit, to allay the turbulent spirit of mutiny, to extinguish the raging flames of rebellion, to provide even for the importunate calls of famine. The energies of his mind were most eminently exerted upon those important occa-



sions; and, in spite of internal distractions, he carried the power of the nation to a greater height than it had ever attained, at any former period.

It will not soon be forgotten with what industry and effect he applied himself to the management of the revenue, and how speedily he restored order to the confused state of our finances. By simplyfying the public accounts he rendered a subject easily intelligible, which had before been involved in extreme intricacy; and, by pointing out the defects of former plans, and suggesting new and more approved systems, he carried with him the sense of the nation in providing for that heavy expenditure, which the peculiar exigency of the times brought upon the State. Nor was he less fortunate in removing, upon difficult occasions, those embarrassments in which the trade of the country was involved, and which, at one period, threatened it with total stagnation; and when they, who, from their habitual pursuits, might have been thought best qualified, and most likely, to suggest a remedy for these evils, were lost in astonishment, distrust, and dismay, he dispelled their fears, as it were by a charm, revived the confidence of our merchants and manufacturers, and restored our commerce to its accustomed activity and enterprize. The plan



of Commercial Exchequer Bills;—the establishment of the Sinking Fund;—the suspension of Cash Payments at the Bank;—the System of War Taxes;—were measures which originated, exclusively, with himself; and were calculated, with profound ability, to meet the various exigencies to which they were applied. Even his enemies, who were disposed to deny him almost every other merit as a Minister, acknowledged him to be the ablest financier whom the nation had ever produced; and, while they made this acknowledgment, they did full justice to the pure disinterestedness, and the inflexible integrity, with which he conducted that branch of the public business.

As a parliamentary orator his powers were various. In statement he was perspicuous, in declamation animated. If he had to explain a financial account he was clear and accurate. If he wanted to rouse a just indignation, for the wrongs of the country, he was rapid, vehement, glowing, and impassioned. And whether his discourse was argumentative or declamatory, it always displayed a happy choice of expression, and a fluency of diction, which could not fail to delight his hearers. So singularly select, felicitous, and appropriate, was his language, that, it has often been remarked, a word of his speech could scarcely be changed



without prejudice to its harmony, vigour, or effect. He seldom was satisfied, with standing on the defensive in debate ; but was proud to contrast his own actions with the avowed intentions of his opponents. These intentions, too, he often exposed with the most pointed sarcasm ; a weapon which, perhaps, no speaker ever wielded with more dexterity and force than himself. He admired much, in Mr. Fox, the happy effect with which he illustrated his arguments, by the application of well-known anecdotes, or by passages from modern authors ; but he did not imitate him in this respect ;—on the other hand, he used to condemn his habit of repetition.

Mr. Pitt's love of amplification has been sometimes urged as detracting from his excellence as an orator ; but, it was his own remark, that every person who addressed a public assembly, and was anxious to be distinctly understood, and to make an impression upon particular points, must either be copious upon those points or repeat them, and that, as a speaker, he preferred copiousness to repetition. Of his eloquence, it may be observed generally, that it combined the eloquence of Tully with the energy of Demosthenes. It was spontaneous ; always great, it shone with peculiar, with unequalled, splendour, in a reply, which precluded the pos-



sibility of previous study; while it fascinated the imagination by the brilliancy of language, it convinced the judgment by the force of argument;—like an impetuous torrent, it bore down all resistance; extorting the admiration even of those who most severely felt its strength, and who most earnestly deprecated its effect. It is unnecessary, and might be presumptuous, to enter more minutely into the character of Mr. Pitt's eloquence;—there are many living witnesses of its powers;—it will be admired as long as it shall be remembered. A few of his speeches in Parliament were published by his friends, and some of them under his own superintendence;—but, it has been observed, that they were considerably weakened in effect by his own corrections; that, if they gained any thing in accuracy, they lost more in vigour and spirit;—and that he had not himself the power of improving, upon reflection, the just and happy expression in which his thoughts were conveyed, as they occurred in the course of debate.

As a public man, Mr. Pitt trusted his character to his public conduct; he rejected those arts and aids to which inferior men have sometimes had recourse to prop their fame; and he disdained to court popularity at the expence of unbecoming condescension; he never failed to



be generally esteemed where he was generally known ; but his public occupations did not permit him to enjoy much of the pleasures of private society, and his hours of retirement and relaxation were chiefly confined to the circle of a few friends, which circle he did not seem inclined to extend. Those hours, indeed, were few, for his life may be said to have been devoted to the public service ; and, perhaps, to have been sacrificed by that devotion ; for his health had gradually declined for the last five years of his life ; but the vigour of his mind was unimpaired, and directed, in spite of a feeble frame, with the most unremitting anxiety, to promote the interests and welfare of the country. With him, indeed, his *country* was ever the *first* object, *self* the *last*.

It would be highly unjust, however, to dismiss the character of Mr. Pitt without correcting the erroneous impression which has too generally prevailed, that he was, in society, cold, distant, and reserved. So far from it, that, in the relations of private life, he was no less amiable, than he was eminent in his public conduct ; and, in the company of his select friends, none charmed more by the ease, playfulness, and vivacity of conversation. He possessed a peculiar sweetness and equanimity of temper, which, under all the varying circumstances of health and sickness, of good and



adverse fortune, was never ruffled. The victory of Trafalgar, though he felt at it the honest pride of an Englishman, elated him to no unbecoming height; nor did the overthrow of his dearest hopes at Austerlitz, though it affected him most sensibly, sink him to an unmanly dejection. Yet this calmness and self-possession arose not from any apathy or coldness; on the contrary, the varied expression of his countenance, and the fire of his eye, shewed him to be, what he really was, exquisitely sensible to every feeling;—but they were the natural result of a strong and well-regulated mind—of the conscious rectitude of his measures, and of the happy mildness of his disposition.

The same benevolence and simplicity of heart strongly marked his manners and deportment, which were, in the highest degree, prepossessing. They bespoke the total absence of any thing like moroseness in his nature. With the most playful vivacity, he assumed no superiority in conversation; nor ever oppressed any man with the strength of his talents, or the brilliancy of his wit. It was matter of surprise how so much fire could be mitigated, and yet not enfeebled, by so much gentleness;—and how such power could be so delightful. Modesty was a striking feature in Mr. Pitt's



character; he was attentive to the humblest, and kindly patient to the weakest, opinions. No man was ever more beloved by his friends, or inspired those who had the happiness of living in his society with a more sincere and affectionate attachment. In his conduct, he was rigidly just, and strictly moral; and, as his virtues were greater, so were his failings less, than fall to the lot of most men.

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On the 27th of January, the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Henry Lascelles, resolved, “that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions that the remains of the Right Honourable William Pitt be interred at the public expence, and that a monument be erected, in the collegiate church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of that excellent statesman, with an inscription, expressive of the public sense of so great and irreparable a loss; and to assure his Majesty, that this House will make good the expences attending the same.”

On the third of February, the House, on the motion of Mr. Cartwright, further resolved, “that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, to represent to his Majesty, that this House, having received information, that, on



the death of the Right Honourable William Pitt, he left debts to a considerable amount, for the payment of which his property has been found insufficient, and being desirous to shew every testimony of their esteem and respect for the memory of the said Right Honourable William Pitt, most humbly beseech his Majesty to advance a sum, not exceeding forty thousand pounds, towards the payment of the said debts, and to assure his Majesty that this House will make good the same."

This sum was barely sufficient to discharge the debts which Mr. Pitt had contracted, and which had been, in a course of accumulation, during the whole period of his administration. His original private fortune was ten thousand pounds, and the late Duke of Rutland left him a legacy of three thousand. Immediately after his decease it was determined, that some persons should examine into the state of his affairs, and it was upon their estimate of the amount of his debts, and of the probable produce of his effects, that the £40,000 was voted by Parliament. Previous to his entrance into public life, Mr. Pitt's expences never exceeded his income. But the inadequacy of the salary annexed to his appointments to meet the expenditure unavoidably attached to them, and the impracticability of attention, on the



part of a man who had the affairs of an empire to regulate, to the economical regulations of his household, involved him in embarrassments. The only extra expences which he incurred were for improvements at Walmer and at Holwood, which constituted, indeed, his only amusement, during his hours of relaxation from official labours;—an amusement at once rational, congenial, and honourable, to a great and virtuous mind, which never indulged in habits of dissipation, nor rioted in licentious enjoyments. He was buried (on the 22d of February) in Westminster Abbey, near the *north door*, in the aisle in which the monument of his father stands. His funeral was a public one; and was attended by a considerable number of his political and private friends. The Dukes of York, Cumberland, and Cambridge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, several of the Bishops, and many members, of both Houses of Parliament, were present. The monument, to be erected to his memory, is to be placed over the *west door* of the Abbey.

FINIS.







## GENERAL INDEX.

### A.

**Abercorn**, the Marquis of, proposes the same address in the House of Lords, that the Master of the Rolls had proposed in the House of Commons, respecting the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, and censures the society of the friends of the people. iii. 183.

**Abercrombie**, Sir Ralph, commands the first division of the army, in the expedition against Holland, in 1799, vi. 341.—Effects a landing at the Helder, ib. 342.—Repulses General Brune, ib. 343.—Commands the expedition to Egypt, in 1801, ib. 625.—Lands in Aboukir Bay, ib.—Attacks the French, on the road to Alexandria, ib. 629.—Death of, ib. 630.

**Abingdon**, the Earl of, supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy Bill, iv. 151.—Supports Lord Guildford's address, respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, v. 88.

**Aboukir**, destruction of the French fleet at, v. 503 to 587.—Effects of Nelson's victory at, vi. 4. 8. 11.—Landing of a British force at, in 1801, ib. 625.

**Acra**, account of the siege of, vi. 284.—Protection of, by Sir Sidney Smith's squadron, ib. 284. 287, 288.—Reinforcement of the garrison of, ib. 288.—Flight of Buonaparté from, ib. 299.

**Adair**, Mr. sent to St. Petersburg by Mr. Fox, iii. 26.—Favourably received by the Empress, ib. 29.

**Adair**, Mr. Serjeant, supports the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and contends that a treasonable conspiracy actually existed in 1794, iv. 224.—Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for the repeal of the new Treason and Sedition Acts, vindicates the Scotch judges against the aspersions of that gentleman, and attributes the attempt on the King's life to the inflammatory harangues of seditious societies, v. 126, 127.

**Adam**, Mr. questions the legality of the sentences of the Scotch judges on Messrs. Muir and Palmer, for sedition; and introduces a bill, for subjecting the sentences of the Scotch judges, in criminal cases, to an appeal to the House of Lords, iv. 37, 38.—Loses his motion, ib. 39.—Moves for a revival of the proceedings of the Scotch Court of Justiciary, in the cases of Muir and Palmer, ib.—Loses that motion also, ib. 43.—Makes another motion respecting the defects of the Scotch laws, which he likewise loses, ib.



**Adams, Daniel**, committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116.—Discharged, ib. 223.

**Adda**, the defeat of the French on, by Suworow, in 1799, vi. 327.

**Addington, Mr.** chosen speaker of the House of Commons, in 1789, ii. 241.—Re-elected speaker of the House of Commons, at the period of the Union, vi. 544.—Resigns the Office of Speaker, ib. 575.—Made First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, ib. 584.—Opposes the budget for 1802, ib. 652.—Disappointed in expecting the peace of Amiens to be permanent, ib. 674.—Extract from the "Brief Memoirs of the Administration of," ib. 677.—Weakness of the administration of, becomes apparent to the public, ib. 701.—Makes overtures to Mr. Pitt, ib. 703.—Objects to the admission of the Lords Spencer and Grenville, and Mr. Windham, into the proposed new ministry, ib. 704.—Breaks off the negotiation, ib.—Conduct of, after that event, ib.—Resigns, ib. 708.—Opposes Mr. Pitt's Army of Reserve bill, ib. 729.—Created Viscount Sidmouth, ib. 795. (See Sidmouth, Lord.)

**Addington, Mr. J. H.** appointed one of the secretaries of the treasury, in 1801, vi. 584.

**Address, an**, to the King, carried in opposition to the Pitt ministry, i. 83. 124. 137. 139, 140.—Agreed to by the Irish Parliament, declaring the Prince of Wales regent, ii. 213.—Received, and answered, by his Royal Highness, ii. 215.—A joint, of both Houses of Parliament, on the second report of the Committee of Secrecy, for investigating the books and papers of the seditious clubs, iv. 152.—A loyal parliamentary, presented to the King, after his escape from the mob, in 1795, ib. 403.

**Addresses, congratulatory**, on the King's recovery from illness, ii. 237.—Faction, from obscure English societies, at Newington, Manchester, Norwich, and London, to the French national assembly, iii. 273. 275.—Administration, Pitt, formation of the, i. 77.—Resolutions carried against the, ib. 112.

**Administration, intended resignation of**, in 1800, vi. 569. 573.—A list of the new, in 1801, ib. 584.—General character of the, ib. 585.—Dissolution of the Addingtonian, in 1804, ib. 708.—A list of the new, in 1804, ib. 720.

**Admiralty, three of the Lords of the**, proceed to Portsmouth, at the time of the mutiny, in 1797, v. 143.—Promise an increase of wages to the seamen, ib.—Proceed to the Nore, ib. 151.—Motion of Mr. Pitt, with the view to an inquiry into the criminal neglect of the, in 1803, vi. 692. 699. 701.

**Advocate, the Lord**, opposes Mr. Adam's motion for revising the proceedings of the Scotch Court of Justiciary, in the cases of Muir and Palmer, iv. 40.



Adultery, remarks on the crime of, vi. 494.—Speech of the Duke of Clarence on, ib. 495, 496.

Adultress, an, a bill for preventing the marriage of, with her paramour, introduced by lord Auckland, vi. 493.—Opposed by the Duke of Clarence, ib. 495.—Supported by the Lords Eldon, Hobart, and Grenville, and by the Bishops of Durham, Rochester, and London, and passed in the House of Lords, ib. 498.—Supported, in the House of Commons, by Mr. Pitt, but thrown out by a majority of 39, ib.

African Negroes. (See Negroes, African.)

Aix, excellent speech of the archbishop of, ii. 343.

Albans, St. Tavern, meeting at the, to promote an union of parties, i. 120.

Alexander, the Emperor, accession of, to the throne of Russia, vi. 622.—Abolishes the innovations of his father, and releases the English prisoners, ib.—Makes peace with England, ib. 623.—Remonstrances of, against the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, ib. 725.—Refuses to accede to the terms of the armistice, proposed by Buonaparté, after the battle of Austerlitz, ib. 800.—Mr. opposes the Catholic Petition, ib. 752.

Alexandria, arrival of the French at, v. 587.—Surrender of, to the allies, in 1799, vi. 331.—Battle of, in 1801, ib. 629.—Surrender of, to the English, ib. 633.

Alien Bill, the, introduction of, and reflections on, iii. 303.—Complained of by M. Chauvelin and M. Le Brun, ib. 304.

Aliens, French decree against, iii. 305. 361.—Bill respecting, passed in 1798, v. 258.

Alkmaar, a convention concluded at, in 1799, for the evacuation of Holland, by the allied English and Russian army, vi. 351.

Allegiance, modification of the oaths of, for the Roman Catholics, ii. 562.

Alliance, treaty of, between the French and Dutch republics, iv. 255.

Alps, passage of the, by Buonaparté, vi. 503.

Altenkirchen, battle of, in 1796, iv. 545.

Alvinzy, General, defeats the French, near Verona, iv. 594.

*Ambigu*, the prosecution of the editor of, by Buonaparté, for a libel, vi. 663.

American Rebellion. (See Rebellion, American.)

Amiens, account of the treaty of, vi. 637.—Remarks on the, ib.—Defended by Mr. Pitt, ib. 642.—Approved by Mr. Fox, and his friends, ib. 645.—Condemned by Mr. Windham, ib.—Differences of opinion, respecting the, ib. 649.—Rupture of the, ib. 668. 674.

Ammunition, &c. the importation, removal, or keeping of, prohibited in Ireland, v. 362.



- Amnesty**, a general, passed for all revolutionary crimes in France, ii. 506.
- Amsterdam**, taken possession of by the Duke of Brunswick, i. 433.
- Anarcharsis Clootz**, blasphemies, and execution of, iv. 195.
- Anecdote**, a curious, relating to the deputation from all the nations of the earth, to the French national assembly, ii. 501.
- Angelo**, St. surrender of the castle of, to the French, v. 565.
- Annual Register**. (See Register, Annual.)
- Antoinette**, Queen of France, magnanimity of, ii. 416.—Escapes assassination, ib. 417, 418, iii. 254.—Confined in the temple, iii. 256.—Trial and murder of, ib. 501, 502.
- Antrim**, the town of, attacked by the rebels, v. 465.
- Antwerp**, a congress holden at, iii. 483.
- Appendix B. i. 507.**—Treaty of commerce and navigation between England and France.—C. i. 532. Treaty of defensive alliance between England and Holland.—D. i.—Treaty of defensive alliance between England and Prussia, 538.
- Appendix A. ii. 577.** List of the members who voted for, and against, Mr. Pitt's motion respecting the regency, (see page 98.)
- Appendix A. iii. 509.** Account of the number of criminals executed in London and Middlesex, from 1749 to 1806.—B. ib. 519. Proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings.—C. ib. 523. Letter from General Dumouriez to Lord Auckland.
- Appendix A. iv. 605.** Proposed resolution of Parliament, censuring Ministers for their conduct towards the French Republic.
- Appendix A. v. 593.**—Manifesto of the British government against France, in 1796.—B. ib. 600.—Protest of Earl Fitzwilliam, against the opening of a negotiation for peace with the French Republic.—C. ib. 606.—Disaffected extracts from the Morning Chronicle.
- Appenzell**, the canton of, refuses the civic oath proposed by General Schauenbourg, v. 533.
- Arau**, assembling of the Swiss directory, and Legislative body, at, ib. 530.
- Archdall**, Mr. defends Mr. Pitt, against the attacks of Sir Francis Burdett, vi. 652.
- Arcole**, defeat of the Austrians at, in 1796, iv. 595.
- Arcot**, parliamentary discussions concerning the debts of the Nabob of, i. 213.
- Aristocrats**, French, marked out as objects of proscription and murder, ii. 270. 335. 389.
- Aristocrat**, ludicrous definitions of the term, ii. 335.
- Arklow**, defeat of the Irish rebels at, v. 464.
- Armagh**, ferocious conduct of the Papists in, ib. 321.
- Armanent**, Russian, iii. 12.



**Armed Neutrality.** (See Neutrality, armed.)

**Armies, standing,** Mr. Pitt's remarks on, i. 478.

**Armistice, termination of the,** between the Austrians and French, in 1796, iv. 543.—Conclusion of an, between the French and Neapolitans, in 1799, vi. 27.—Conclusion of an, between Buonaparté and General Melas, after the battle of Marengo, ib. 505.—Ditto, between General Moreau and General Kráý, ib. 506.

**Armorial Bearings.** (See Bearings, armorial.)

**Arms, &c. the importation, removal, or keeping, of, prohibited in Ireland,** v. 362.

**Army, attempts to reduce the,** iii. 400.—Proposed augmentation of the, in 1795, iv. 255.—Opposed by Mr. Fox, ib. 256.—Supported by Mr. Pitt, ib. 257.—Pay of the, increased, v. 160.—Means taken for recruiting the, in 1799, vi. 392.—British, retreat of the, from Holland, iv. 254.—Austrian, state of the, in 1799, vi. 316.—French, state of the, in 1799, ib. 315, 316.

**Asgill, Sir Charles, drives the rebels from Castlecomer,** v. 483.

**Ashley, —, sent, as an agent, to Paris, by the society of United Britons,** vi. 97.

**Asiatic League.** (See League, Asiatic.)

**Asiatic Delinquents.** (See Delinquents, Asiatic.)

**Assalini, opinion of, respecting the plague at Jaffa,** vi. 277.

**Assembly, French National, formation of the,** ii. 288.—Oath taken by the members of the, 291.—Adjourn to the Tennis Court, 301.—Swear not to separate, 302.—Sit in the church of St. Louis, 306.—Declare their persons inviolable, 328.—Joined by the nobles and clergy, 342.—Address the King, to remove the troops which had been stationed for the protection of the capital, 351. 361. 372.—Send a deputation to Paris, to announce the King's orders for the departure of the troops, 379.—Abolish feudal rights, 393.—Suppress tithes, 396.—Pass several illegal resolutions, 402, 403.—Resolve on removing to Paris, 405.—Hold their first sittings there, 422.—Receive a congratulatory address from the English Revolution Society, 429.—Consider it inexpedient to support Spain, in her hostile conduct towards England, 489.—Annul armorial bearings, and other honorary distinctions, 497.—Reward the *conquerors of the Bastille*, 498.—Harangued by Anacharsis Clootz, 499.—Pass a general amnesty for all revolutionary crimes, 506.—Refuse to pass a similar amnesty, for persons accused of opposing the revolution, ib.—Thrown into a tumult, by the speech of the president, Frondeville, 507.—Order Frondeville to be imprisoned in his own house, 509.—Destroy the freedom of debate, iii. 77.—Persecute the non-juring priests, 78.—Confused by the appearance of the King, 83.—Alarmed at the escape of the King, 96.—Assume the whole regal power, 97.—



- Prevent the reading of a loyal declaration, 99.—Discuss the motion of Pethion, for arraigning and trying the King, 100.—Complete the new constitution, *ib.*—Dissolved, 101.—Meeting of the new, 209.—Declare themselves a Legislative National Assembly, and swear fidelity to the King, and the Constitution, 211.—Break their oath, 212.—Encouraged by seditious addresses, 216.—Vote an address to the King, for an immediate dispersion of the emigrants in Germany, 221.—Compliment Anarcharsis Clootz, on his harangue for revolutionising the neighbouring states, 222.—Receive the seditious addresses of some obscure Dutch and English societies, and of rebels from Liège and the Austrian Netherlands, 224, 225.—Encourage rebellion in those states, *ib.*—Declare war against Austria, 232.—Pay General Dumouriez for secret services, 342.—Pension Petion and Roland, *ib.*—Pass decrees for disbanding the guards, for forming a camp of twenty thousand Jacobins, and for banishing the non-juring priests, 247, 248, 249.—Receive, and compliment, Santerre and his ruffians, 250.—Swear to suffer no change in the existing constitution, 253.—Receive addresses from the sections, demanding the deposition of the King, 255.—Suspend the functions of royalty, and vest the supreme power in an executive council, 256.
- Assignats, first issued in France, *ii.* 496.—Bill for prohibiting the circulation of, in England, *iii.* 358.
- Associations, treasonable, proclamations against Irish, *v.* 384.
- Association, Loyal, happy effects of the first, in England, *iii.* 286.—Names of the Committee of the, *ib.* 289.—Abused by the Opposition, in Parliament, *ib.* 297.
- Atheism, the first fruits of French liberty, *iii.* 306.
- Athens, the citizens of, subject to a Test Law, *i.* 377.
- Athol, the Duke of, account of the bill of, for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, *vi.* 493.
- Attornies, duty on the indentures, and admission of, *iv.* 50.—Catholics allowed to practise as, *v.* 337.
- Attorney-General, the, introduces a bill for preventing traitorous correspondence, *iii.* 407.—Supports the principle of voluntary contributions, for the defence of the country, *iv.* 56.—Produces various seditious libels, in Parliament, *ib.* 427.—Supports the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing treason and sedition, *ib.* 428.—Introduces a bill for regulating the printing and publishing of Newspapers, *v.* 281.—The bill passed into a law, *ib.* 291.—The Irish, attack of the opposition on, respecting the prosecution of the sheriffs of Dublin, *v.* 300.
- Avenche, a Swiss peasant, intrepidity, and death, of, *v.* 521. 523.
- Avignon, massacres at, *iii.* 218.—Annexation of, to France, *ib.* 235.



Auckland, Lord, receives a letter, from General Dumouriez, at the Hague, requesting a conference with his lordship, and with M. Von Spieghel, iii. 343.—Memorial presented by, to the States-General of Holland, ib. 383. 420.—Precautions suggested by, to the Dutch government, for defeating Dumouriez's plan of invasion, ib. 415.—Personally disavows the improper motives which had been imputed to him, respecting the memorial which he had presented to the States-General of Holland, ib. 430.—Supports the conduct of the British government, on Lord Guildford's motion respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, v. 88.—Supports the Income Tax, vi. 80.—Introduces a bill for preventing the marriage of an adultress with the object of her criminal attachment, ib. 493.—Carries the measure in the Lords, but loses it in the Commons, by a majority of thirty-nine, ib. 498.—Appointed one of the Postmasters-general, in 1801, ib. 584.—Opposes the Catholic Petition, ib. 746.

August, the third of, memorable sitting of the National Assembly, on, ii. 392.—Memorable conspiracy of the tenth of, iii. 255.

Augustine, St. the tomb of, at Pavia, plundered by the French, iv. 582.

Aulic Council. (See Council, Aulic.)

Austerlitz, the battle of, vi. 799.

Austria and Holland, hostilities between, i. 206. 209.—Treaty between, ib. 276.

Austria, at war with Turkey, i. 450.—Declaration of, respecting France, iii. 102.—War declared against, by France, ib. 232.—Manifesto of, against France, ib. 238.

Austria and Prussia, combined forces of, enter France, iii. 259.—Evacuate the French territory, ib. 265.

Austria, reflections on the conduct of, in the dismemberment of Poland, iv. 348.—Favourable disposition of, in 1798, vi. 10.—Unprincipled conduct of the Cabinet of, during the campaign of 1799, ib. 338.—Accession of, to the new confederacy against France, ib. 798.—The Emperor of, signs the treaty of Presburgh, ib. 800.

Austrian Army, successes of the, against the French, iii. 473, 474.

Austrians, amount of the forces of the, at the opening of the campaign, in 1796, iv. 544. 570, 571.—Losses of the, during the Italian campaign of 1796, ib. 601.—Retreat of the, from the Tagliamento, in 1797, v. 175.

## B.

Baden, the Prince of, raised to the dignity of Elector, vi. 659.

—Base conduct of, respecting the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, ib. 726.



Babar, famine at, i. 58.

Bailly, M. apprized of the French King's intention to hold a royal session, ii. 298. 301. 306.—Falsehood uttered by, ib. 326.—Appointed Mayor of Paris, ib. 380.—Execution of, iii. 506.

Baker, Mr. proposes and carries a strong resolution respecting the privileges of Parliament, subsequently to the rejection of Mr. Fox's India Bills, i. 68. 73.—Moves for information respecting the Russian armament, iii. 22.

Ballinahinch, the town of, asserted by Lord Clare to be one of the rankest citadels of treason in Ireland, v. 423.—Surrender of General Humbert at, ib. 490.

Baltic, the, account of the expedition to, in 1801, vi. 617. 623.

Baltinglass, the town of, attacked by the rebels, v. 459.

Bancal, one of the four commissioners detained by General Dumouriez, account of, iii. 433.

Bank of England, refusal of the, to discount bills in 1793, iii. 436.—Extraordinary run on the, v. 96.—Causes of, ib. 98.—Payment of cash at the, stopped, by an Order in Council, in 1797, ib. 101.—A secret committee proposed, and appointed, to investigate the affairs of the, ib. 102. 106.—Assets of the, proved to exceed its debts, ib. 107.—An Act passed to enable the directors to issue notes instead of cash, conformably to an Order in Council, ib. 110.—Amount of the notes of the, in circulation, from 1783 to 1797, ib. 117, 118.

Bankers, the Dublin, pass resolutions against the Irish Union, vi. 156.

Banking, Mr. Pitt's explanation of the true principle of, v. 119.

Bantry Bay, attempt of the French to land at, in 1796, v. 383.

Baraillon, M. motion of, for limiting the application of the French Decree of December 24, 1792, to those powers with whom the French were actually at war, iii. 353.

Barbarity, horrible instances of French, iii. 241.

Barclay, the Protestant schoolmaster of Forkhill, murder of, by the Papists, v. 323.

Barham, Mr. makes a motion for the recall of certain Proclamations issued by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, at Martinique, as oppressive and unjustifiable, iv. 337.—The motion lost, by the previous question being carried, ib. 340.

Barham, Lord, chosen First Lord of the Admiralty, vi. 796.

Baring, Sir Francis, opposes the Income Tax, vi. 61.

Barlow, Joel, seditious conduct of, iii. 278.

Barmond, the abbe de, arrest of, ii. 506.

Barnave, atrocious sneer of, in the National Assembly, ii. 385.—Execution of, ib. 506.

Barracks, debate respecting the proposed erection of, iii. 397.

Barras, appointed, by the French Convention, to command the Sections, iv. 212.—The only member of the old French Directory, re-elected in June, 1799, vi. 361.—Resigns his seat, ib. 366.



- Barrere, exclamation of, on the evacuation of Toulon by the English, iv. 14.—Accuses Mr. Pitt of contriving a plot for the assassination of Robespierre, iv. 200.
- Barrington, Lord, supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy Bill, iv. 151.
- Barristers, Catholics allowed to practise as, v. 338.
- Barthelemi, M. applied to by Mr. Wickham, respecting the desire of the French Government for peace, in 1796, iv. 518.—Communicates the answer of the Directory on the subject, ib. 519.—Succeeds Letourneur in the Directory, v. 190.—Arrested, and sent to Guiana, ib. 193.
- Basil, seizure of the Bishopric of, by the French, v. 510.
- Bastille, attack and surrender of the, ii. 362. 367.—Conquerors of the, rewarded by the National Assembly, ii. 498.—Destruction of the, commemorated at Birmingham, iii. 66.
- Bassano, defeat of the Austrians at, in 1796, iv. 593.
- Basset, Sir Francis, supports the Pitt and Grenville Bills for preventing Treason and Sedition, and proves the connection between the seditious meetings at Copenhagen-house and the subsequent attack upon the King, in 1795, iv. 430.
- Bavaria, projected exchange of, for the Austrian Netherlands, i. 274.—Prince of, makes peace with France, in 1796, iv. 560.—Proposed subsidy to, in 1800, vi. 471. 480.—Entrance of the French into, in 1800, ib. 506.—Prince of, raised to the dignity of Elector, ib. 659.
- Baxter, John, charged with high treason, iv. 324.
- Bazieu, M. defends the massacres at Avignon, iii. 218.
- Bearings, armorial,---Suppression of, in France, ii. 497.---Duty on, in England, v. 247.
- Beaufoy, Mr. moves for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, i. 378.—Fallacy of the argument of, exposed, ib. 380.—Answered by Lord North, ib. 382.—Loses his motion, ib. 390.—Revives the discussions on the Test and Corporation Acts, ii. 240.
- Beaulieu, General, defeats the French, at Degeo, in 1796, iv. 573.
- Bedford, the Duke of, echoes Mr. Fox's resolutions, for condemning the war, and censuring the conduct of Ministers, iv. 163.—Moves for opening a negotiation with France, in 1795, ib. 274.—Supports Lord Guildford's address, on the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, v. 88.—Moves an address to the King, for the removal of Ministers, ib. 162.—Loses his motion, by ninety-one against fourteen, ib.—Opposes Lord Minto's motion, for the fine and imprisonment of the printer and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, for a libel on the House of Lords, ib. 277.—Moves an amendment to Lord Minto's motion, which is rejected, ib. 279.—Opposes the Income Tax, vi. 80.—Advances an erroneous position, respecting tithes, ib. 82.—Defends the conduct of the First Consul, ib. 410.—Imputes



- Lord Grenville's attack upon the character of Buonaparté, to littleness of mind, *ib.*—Moves an address, to compel Ministers to open a negotiation with France, *ib.* 411.—Loses his motion, *ib.*
- Bedingfield, Mr. rescues the King from the mob, *iv.* 398.
- Belfast, petition from the inhabitants of, for a reform in the Irish Parliament, rejected, *i.* 249.—Plunder of the King's stores at, by the rebels, *v.* 384.
- Belgrave, Lord, supports the propositions of Mr. Pitt respecting the regency, *ii.* 150.—Moves an amendment on Mr. Nicholls's motion, respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, *vi.* 655.—Carries his amendment, in Mr. Pitt's favour, by a large majority, *ib.* 657.
- Bellegarde, General, expels the French from the Grisons, *vi.* 319.
- Bellew, Dr. the Popish bishop of Killala, asserted to have encouraged the Irish priests to join the French, *v.* 488.
- Belliard, General, surrenders Grand Cairo to the English, in 1801, *vi.* 632.
- Bells, church, converted into cannon, by the French, *iii.* 486.
- Bellona, gallant resistance of an Austrian detachment at, in 1797, *v.* 174.
- Bengal, famine at, *i.* 58.
- Beresford, Mr. dismissed from his situation under the Irish government, by Earl Fitzwilliam, *iv.* 312.—Character of, by Earl Fitzwilliam, *ib.* 313.—Ditto, by the Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Buckingham, the Earl of Westmoreland, and Lord Auckland, *ib.* 314.
- Bergen, evacuation of, by the French, in 1799, *vi.* 347.
- Berlin, treaty of, between the King of Prussia, and the electors of Brunswick Lunenburgh, and of Saxony, *i.* 274.
- Bernadotte, General, defeated by General Nauendorf, in 1796, *iv.* 555.—Appointment of, as ambassador at Vienna, *v.* 542.—Arrests M. D'Antraigues, an emigrant, in the Russian service, *ib.* 543.—Ignorance of, as to the qualifications of an ambassador, *ib.*—Displays the tri-coloured flag, and attempts to excite an insurrection at Vienna, *ib.* 544, 545.—Assailed by the populace, *ib.* 546.—Leaves Vienna, *ib.* 547.
- Berne, weakness of the government of, *v.* 507.—Recall of Mr. Wickham, the British Minister, from, *ib.* 509.—The constitution of, changed by the Senate, *ib.* 513.—Surrender of, by capitulation, *ib.* 517.—The government of, abused by Buonaparté, for protecting Mallet du Pan, *ib.* 521.—The Secret Council of, pronounce a sentence of banishment against Mallet du Pan, *ib.*—The Senate of, prepare a ball, &c. in honour of Buonaparté, *ib.* 522.
- Berthier, M. murder of, *ii.* 384.



- Berthier, General, enters Rome, in 1798, v. 562.—Engages to respect the government, declaring his sole object to be the punishment of the persons who killed General Duphot, ib.—Obtains possession of the castle of St. Angelo, and liberates all the convicts in Rome, ib. 565.—Makes a triumphal entry into the capital, ib. 566.—Destroys the papal government, and converts it into a republic, ib. 566, 567.—Plants the tree of liberty in the capitol, ib. 566.—Sends the Pope from Rome, and plunders the Vatican, ib. 569.—Employed by Buonaparté, to enforce his orders, for the murder of 3,800 Turkish prisoners, at Jaffa, vi. 276.—Made war minister, by the French Consuls, ib. 389.
- Bertrand, M. resigns his situation in the French cabinet, iii. 240.
- Billaud Varennes, barbarous remark of, respecting pregnant women, iv. 189.—Supports Tallien in his attack upon Robespierre, ib. 208.
- Binasco, the village of, burnt and depopulated by Buonaparté, in 1796, iv. 583.
- Birmingham, seditious hand-bills circulated at, iii. 66.—Riots at, ib. 67. 167.—Daggers manufactured at, ib. 307.
- Biron, the Duc de, execution of, iv. 191.
- Births, repeal of the tax on, iv. 50.
- Boetzelaer, the governor of Williamstadt, gallant conduct of, iii. 419.
- Bois-le-duc, surrender of, to the French, iv. 185.—Treachery and cowardice of the commander of, who put 400 French emigrants to the sword, ib.
- Bologna, seizure of, by the French, v. 572.
- Bolton, account of a meeting of dissenters at, ii. 465.—Lord, opposes the Catholic Petition, vi. 746.
- Bon, General, the division of, employed by Buonaparté, to murder 3,800 Turkish prisoners, at Jaffa, vi. 278.—Death of, ib. 296.
- Bond, Mr. Oliver, admits that the Irish rebels would not be satisfied with any concessions whatever, v. 398.—Apprehension of, ib. 449.—Trial, conviction, and banishment, of, ib. 485.
- Bonney, John Augustus, committed for trial on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116.—Discharged, ib. 225.
- Boulay de la Meurthe, memorable speech of, respecting the revolution effected by Buonaparté, after his return from Egypt, vi. 379.—Inconsistency of, ib. 381. 387.
- Bourdeaux, the archbishop of, joins the National Assembly, ii. 307.—Made keeper of the Seals, ib. 387.
- Bourne, Mr. S. appointed one of the secretaries of the treasury, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Boyd and Benfield, motion respecting money advanced to the house of, by Mr. Pitt, vi. 763.



Bragge, Mr. moves an amendment to Mr. Fox's motion, approving the conduct of Mr. Pitt, in transmitting money to the Emperor of Germany, without the authority of Parliament, v. 72.—His amendment carried, by two hundred and eighty-five against eighty-one, *ib.*—Supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487.

Brand's, the late Rev. J. notice respecting a letter of, to Mr. Gifford, "on Buonaparté's proposals for opening a negotiation for peace," &c. vi. 476.—Extracts from his pamphlet respecting the scarcity of corn, in 1800, vi. 523. 531.

Braughall, —, apprehended on charges of high treason, v. 340.

Bread, new, act to prevent the sale of, in 1800, vi. 483.

Breda, surrender of, through the treachery of its governor, iii. 418.

Bremen, arrival of the English at, from Holland, in the winter of 1794-5, iv. 254.

Brenta, passage of the, by the Austrians, iv. 593.

Breteuil, the Baron de, succeeds M. Neckar, as Prime-minister of France, ii. 359.

Breton Club, addresses of the, to the National Assembly, ii. 384.

Brezé, the Marquis de, apprises the President, Bailly, of the King's intention to hold a royal session, ii. 298. 301.

Bricks, new duty on, iv. 50.

Bridport, Lord, defeats the French fleet, off L'Orient, iv. 382.—Instructed by the commissioners from the Admiralty, to inform the seamen of his fleet, that their grievances should be redressed, v. 143. 145.

Brissac, the Duke de, impeachment and murder of, iii. 247.

Brissot, M. first makes himself conspicuous, iii. 100.—Defends the massacres of the Whites, at St. Domingo, *ib.* 217.—Insists on the policy of war, *ib.* 223. 226, 227. 233.—Libels the King, *ib.* 239.—Calls for his deposition, *ib.* 254.—Heads the Girondists, *ib.* 472. 492.—True picture of France by, after the murder of the King, *ib.* 492.—Answered by Camille Desmoulins, *ib.* 494.—Arrest of, *ib.* 497.—Impeachment and trial of, *ib.* 503, 504.—Condemnation and execution of, *ib.* 505.—Charged by Robespierre, with occasioning the war between England and France, iv. 13.—Extract from a memorable report of, respecting the convention with the people of Geneva, v. 498.

Brissotin Ministry, formation of a, iii. 240.

Britons, United, society of the, send Ashley, as their agent, to Paris, vi. 97.



- Brittany, English plan of co-operation with the loyalists of, iv. 51.
- Broglie, Marshal, appointed Commander in Chief of the forces in the Isle of France, ii. 348.
- Brown, Mr. defends the Established Church, in Ireland, on the subject of tithes, against the attacks of Mr. Grattan, v. 308.
- Brown, Colonel, murder of, in the Irish insurrection of 1803, vi. 736.
- Brueys, Admiral, comparison of, with Leonidas, vi. 12.
- Bruges, the sluices of the canal of, destroyed by Sir Eyre Coote and Capt. Popham, in 1798, v. 590.
- Brun, M. complaint of, respecting the Alien Bill, iii. 304.
- Brune, General, enters Switzerland, in February, 1798, v. 508.  
—Issues a proclamation respecting the objects of the French Directory, ib.—Concludes a truce with the Swiss, ib. 514.—Proposes to divide Switzerland into three republics, ib. 525.—Declares the Helvetic Republic one and indivisible, ib. 526.—Commands the French and Dutch army in Holland, in 1799, vi. 343.—Attacks General Abercrombie, and is repulsed, ib.—Harasses the English army in its retreat, ib. 349.—Concludes a convention with the Duke of York for the evacuation of Holland, ib. 351.
- Brunswick, resignation of the Duke of, i. 204.—Enters Holland at the head of a Prussian army, ib. 433.—Takes possession of Amsterdam, and restores the Stadtholder, ib.—Enters France at the head of the Prussian army, iii. 260.—Ordered to propose a suspension of hostilities, ib. 262.—Compelled to re-cross the Rhine, iv. 185.
- Brunswick, Prince Frederick of, defeats the French at Bruges, iii. 473.
- Brussels, negotiations at, i. 206. 209.
- Bry, Jean de, selection of, by the Directory, as one of the French Plenipotentiaries at Rastadt, v. 540.
- Buckingham, the Marquis of, announces the King's indisposition to the Irish Parliament, ii. 212.—Refuses to transmit the address, declaring the Prince of Wales Regent, ib. 213.—Dismisses Mr. Ponsonby and his friends from their situations under the Irish Government, ii. 229. iv. 311.—Appointed Viceroy of Ireland in 1787, v. 304.—Account of the administration of, ib.
- Buckinghamshire, the Earl of, obtains the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, vi. 795.—Resigns, ib. 796, 797.
- Buckner, Admiral, offers the King's pardon to the mutineers at the Nore, which is refused, v. 151.
- Budget, outline of the, for 1784, i. 238.—for 1787, ib. 390.—for 1788, ib. 480.—for 1789, ii. 241.—



for 1790, ib. 473.--- for 1791, iii. 56.---for 1792, ib. 119.---for 1793, ib. 403.---for 1794, iv. 48.---for 1795, ib. 274. for 1796, ib. 494.---for 1797, v. 30. --for 1798, ib. 217. 243.---for 1799, vi. 30. 83.---for 1800, ib. 481.---for 1801, ib. 576.

Bull, a letter from Thomas to his brother John, iii. 297.

Buonaparté, Napoleone, said to have presided at the massacres of Toulon, iii. 491.

Buonaparté, Napoleone, heads the Conventional troops against the Parisians, on the 5th of October, 1795, iv. 378.---Marries Madame Beauharnois, in 1796, 570.---Receives the command of the army of Italy, ib.---Defeats the Austrians at Monteliscino, 572.---Crosses the Po, 574.---Storms the Bridge at Lodi, 575.---Carries it, 577.---Transmits a false and exaggerated account of his victory to the Directory, 580.---Suspected of cowardice, ib.---Enters Milan, 581.---Plunders the Duke of Modena, 581. 584.---Ravages the country of Pavia, 583.---Burns the village of Binasco, and massacres its inhabitants, ib.---Makes peace with the King of Naples, and exacts a contribution from the Pope, 585.---Enters Leghorn, 586.---Besieges Mantua, ib.---Is compelled to retreat with loss, 587.---Compels General Wurmser to retreat, 589.---Narrowly escapes falling into the hands of the Austrians, 590.---Guilty of gross falsehood in his public dispatches, 560, 591. 601.---Obtains possession of Trent, 581.---Defeats the Austrians at Bassano, at Arcole, and at Rivoli, 593. 595. 598.---Makes peace with the Pope, 600.

Buonaparté, Napoleone, issues a lying proclamation to his army at the commencement of the campaign of 1767, v. 174.---Passes the Tagliamento, ib.---Proposes peace to the Archduke Charles, 179.---Abuses the Government of Berne for protecting Mallet du Pan, 521.---Threatens to democratise England in three months, 522.---Plans the ruin of Switzerland, ib.---Frames a Constitution for the Cisalpine Republic, 548.---Sails with the expedition to Egypt, 578.---Obtains possession of Malta, 580.---Plunders the church, ib.---Leaves General Vaubois in the command of the Island, 581.---Arrives at Alexandria, 587.---Takes possession of the town, 588.---Declares his object to be the punishment of the Beys and the Mamelukes, ib.---Promises liberty and equality to the people of Egypt, ib.---Marches to Cairo, 589.---Defeats the Mamelukes, and takes Cairo, 590.---Makes himself master of Lower Egypt, ib.---His communication with Europe cut off, ib.

Buonaparté, Napoleone, compared by the Directory to Themistocles, vi. 12.---Adopts means for securing his conquests in Egypt, 270.---Disclaims Christianity, and converts the Koran



of Mahomet into a code of Jacobinism, 271. Holds a divan, and establishes an institute at Grand Cairo, 272. Attempts to persuade Ghezzar Pacha that he is a friend of the Grand Seignior, 273. Determines to besiege St. John of Acra, 274. Takes the town of Jaffa by assault. Murders 3,800 Turkish prisoners, 275. Sacrifices a veteran Janissary, 276. Orders 580 of his own sick soldiers to be poisoned in the hospital at Jaffa, 278. Accused by a Physician, before the Institute at Cairo, of the massacre of the Turks, and the poisoning of his sick soldiers at Jaffa, and of having previously caused a number of French and Copts to be strangled at Rosetta, 280. Assigns reasons for his conduct, *ib.* Writes a blasphemous letter to Ghezza Pacha, 283. Forms an encampment before Acra, 284. Loses his train of artillery, 285. Proceedings of, during the siege of Acra, 292. Projects the assassination of Sir Sidney Smith, 297. Treacherously makes an assault during a truce, *ib.* Abandons the siege of Acra, and returns to Egypt, 298. Falsely accuses Sir Sidney Smith of inhumanity, 299. Defence of, in the Annual Register for 1799, 302. Corresponds with Tippoo Sultaun, 304. Defeats the Turks near Aboukir, 306. Deserts his post in Egypt, and returns to France, 307. Remarks on the conduct of, on this occasion, by General Dugua, 308. Convicted of falsehood, 309, 310, 311. Letter of, to his brother Joseph, announcing his intention of returning to Europe, 310. Letter of, to General Kleber, announcing his departure from Egypt, and resigning to him the command of the army, 311. 313. Advises General Kleber to negotiate with the Turks, 311. Arrives at Frejus, 361. Return of, to France, considered as his own act, 363. Holds frequent conferences with Sieyes and Rœderer, 365. Obtains the command of the whole military force of the capital, 366. Enters the hall of the Council of Elders, 367. Delivers a violent speech, *ib.* Reviles the Council, 368. Remarks on the speech of, 369. Suddenly quits the Council to harangue the soldiers and the mob, 370. Returns, and again addresses the Council, *ib.* Enters the hall of the Council of Five Hundred, 372. Rescued from the vengeance of the members by Lefebvre, 373. Terror of, *ib.* Excites the Directorial Guard to mutiny, 376. Cheered by the arrival of his brother, 377. Clears the hall of the Council of Five Hundred at the head of a troop of grenadiers, 378. Made Consul in conjunction with Sieyes and Ducos, 384. Causes himself to be chosen First Consul, 390. Announces that event, in a letter to the King of England, professing pacific wishes,



393. Sincerity of, doubted, 397. Retrospect of the general conduct of, 398. Replies to Lord Grenville's answer of his letter to the King of England, and declares France not to have been the aggressor in the war, 406. Character and conduct of, delineated by Mr. Pitt, 440 to 459. Takes the command of the army of reserve in Burgundy, passes the Alps, enters Lombardy, and compels the Austrians to evacuate Milan and Pavia, 503. Attacked by General Melas, near Marengo, *ib.* Loses his presence of mind, and leaves the conduct of the battle to General Desaix, 504. Concludes an armistice and convention with General Melas, recovering all the fortresses taken by General Suwarrow, 505. Endeavours to procure a naval armistice with England, 506. Concludes an advantageous treaty of peace with the Turks, 635. Appoints his brother Joseph to negotiate with the British Minister at Amiens, in 1802, 637. Betrays a disposition to break the peace with England, 658. Raises the Princes of Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemburgh, to the dignity of Electors, 659. Revives the ancient jealousy between the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia, *ib.* Assumes the sovereignty in Italy, and unites Sardinia and Parma to France, 660. Complains of the licentiousness of the British press, 661. Directs M. Otto to prosecute Peltier for a libel, 663. Personally insults Lord Whitworth, 666. Asserts that England shall not retain either Malta or Lampedosa, and that she shall agree to a treaty less advantageous than that of Amiens, 701. Seizes the Duke D'Enghien at Ettenheim, and orders the murder of that Prince, 722, 723. Charges the English with the assassination of the Emperor Paul, 725. Assumes the title of Emperor of the French, 726. Ascribes his elevation to Providence, and orders the Pope to crown him with his own hands, 727. Annexes Genoa to France, 798. Defeats the Austro-Russian army at Austerlitz, 799.
- Buonaparté, Joseph**, sent ambassador to Rome, v. 553. Insists on the release of all persons confined on account of their religious opinions, *ib.* Excites public tumults, *ib.* 554. Leaves Rome, *ib.* 556. Grossly abuses the Pope, *ib.* 561. Appointed to negotiate with the British Minister at Amiens, in 1802, vi. 637.
- Buonaparté, Lucien**, presides at the secret meetings of the French Councils, vi. 366. Presides in the Council of Five Hundred, *ib.* 371. Experiences a check from Grandmaison, one of the members, *ib.* 372. Exerts himself in support of his brother, Napoleone, *ib.* 373. Resigns the president's chair to Chazal, *ib.* 374. Compelled by force to re-assume the



chair, ib. 375. Rescued from his supposed peril, by a party of grenadiers, and conveyed to his brother, ib. Harangues the directorial guard, and excites them to mutiny, ib. 376. Presents a gloomy picture of the Republic, ib. 379.

Buornonville, the French minister at war, seized by Dumouriez, and delivered up to the Austrians, iii. 480.

Burdett, Sir F. moves for a committee of inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Pitt, in 1802, vi. 652. Loses his motion by 246 against 39, ib. 654.

Burials, repeal of the tax on, iv. 50.

Burke, Mr. moves for a reform in the civil list, i. 12. Opposes the King's speech, 17. Remonstrates against the dissolution of Parliament, 167. Prefers charges of high crimes and misdemeanours against Mr. Hastings, 308. 311, 312. Moves that the conduct of the Rohilla war afforded grounds for the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, 313. Opposes Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of India, 321. Opposes the commercial treaty between England and France, 362. Panegyrizes Mr. Pitt's plan for consolidating the custom and excise duties, 372.

Burke, Mr. violently opposes the regency bill, ii. 189. Called to order, for his intemperate language respecting the indisposition of the King, 196. 205. Characterises the spirit and principles of the French revolution, 434. Supports Mr. Pitt, in opposing the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, 464. Moves a resolution in the new Parliament, respecting the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, contending that the impeachment had not been abated by the dissolution, 517. Moves that the impeachment of Mr. Hastings be limited to one charge more, 540.

Burke, Mr. resolves to defend the principles of his "*Reflections on the Revolution in France*" against the attacks of Mr. Fox, in the House of Commons, iii. 8. Censures the conduct of Mr. Fox, in sending Mr. Adair to St. Petersburg, 26. Analyses Paine's *Rights of Man*, 33. Defends himself against the insinuations of Mr. Fox, exposes that gentleman's duplicity, and exhorts the two political leaders of the House to support the British constitution, 40 to 44. Adverts to the proceedings of the seditious societies in England, 47. Combats Mr. Fox's notions respecting aristocracy, 52. Asserted to be a Whig of the old school, 56. Exposes the nature of the new French principles, 108. Censures the society of the Friends of the People, 148. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion, in favour of the Unitarians, 158. Avows his detestation of the Birmingham riots, 162. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for entering into a negotiation with the French Republic, 300. Exposes the inconsistency of Mr. Fox,



respecting the effects of the French revolution, 306. Quotes a speech of Monsieur Dupont, to shew that Atheism was the first fruits of French liberty, 306. Alludes to the manufacture of daggers at Birmingham, and throws one upon the floor of the House of, 307. Opposes Mr. Fox's amendment, in the debate respecting the French declaration of war, 379. Declares the arguments of Mr. Fox to be such as the French papers had asserted would be used in the English House of Commons, 391. Censures Mr. Fox's constant defence of the French government, 393. Animadverts on the ingratitude of Chauvelin, 395. Quotes an infamous expression of Danton, 396. Proves the existence of a correspondence between the English Revolution society and the Jacobin clubs in France, 402. Supports the traitorous correspondence bill, 409. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for a peace with France, 462.

Burke, Mr. accuses the opposition of favouring the views of the enemy, iv. 57. Defends the *lex talionis*, as part of the law of nations, founded on the law of nature, 87. Opposes General Fitzpatrick's motion for the liberation of M. La Fayette, 93.

Burke, Mr. introduces a bill into the Irish Parliament, while secretary to Lord Halifax, for the relief of Papists, v. 297. Predilection of, in favour of the Papists, 348. The son of, made secretary to the Catholic committee, ib. Persuades Mr. Pitt to make farther concessions to the Irish Papists, 349. Observations on the conduct of the friends of, on subjects relating to the Papists, 488.

Burke's "*Reflections on the Revolution in France*," character of, iii. 7.

Burrell, Sir Peter, seconds Lord Clifden's motion for an address to the King, at the meeting of Parliament, in 1794, iv. 12.

Buxtorf, base flattery of Buonaparté, by, v. 522.

Buzenval, M. de, misconduct of, ii. 357. 368.

Byland, Count, Governor of Breda, treachery of, iii. 418.

Byrne, Terence, an Irish Papist, atrocious conduct of, in the murder of an innocent family at Forkhill, v. 324.

Byrne, Edward, directed, by the Papists, to issue writs, for the purpose of forming a National convention in Ireland, v. 338.

Byrne, Patrick, apprehension of, v. 454.

Byrne, Father, statement of, respecting the conduct of Dr. Caulfield, during the Irish rebellion, v. 474.

#### C.

Cabinet, a list of the new, in 1804, vi. 720.

Cadiz, abandonment of the expedition against, in 1800, vi. 510.



- Caernarvon, the Earl of, supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy Bill, iv. 151.
- Cæsar's Camp, forced by the allied army, iii. 487.
- Cairo, Grand, capture of, by Buonaparté, v. 590. An insurrection in the city of, vi. 272. Surrender of, to the English, in 1801, vi. 632.
- Calonne, M. de, exposes the distressed state of the French finances, i. 444.
- Cambaceres, election of, as Second Consul, vi. 390.
- Camden, Earl, resists the Prince of Wales's claim to the regency, ii. 32. Proposes a commission, under the great seal, for giving the royal assent to the Regency-bill, ib. 187.
- Camden, earl, (son of the former) appointed Viceroy of Ireland, iv. 315. v. 378. Sends a message to the Irish Parliament, announcing the insurrection of Ulster, v. 385. Issues a proclamation to the army, for the purpose of quelling the insurrection, ib. 451. Recalled from the Viceroyship of Ireland, ib. 484. Conduct of, in Ireland, applauded by Lord Cornwallis, vi. 6. Appointed one of the Secretaries of State, in 1804, ib. 720. Succeeds Lord Sidmouth as President of the Council, ib. 797.
- Camille, Desmoulins, violent conduct of, ii. 355. Seditious language of, ib. 505. Answers Brissot's defence of the Girondists, iii. 494. Birth, character, and conduct of, ib. Sacrificed by Robespierre, ib. 505. Infamy of the dying speech of, ib. Execution of, iv. 185.
- Campaign, commencement of the, between the Austrians and French, in 1796, iv. 543. Close of, ib. 567. Commencement of the, in Italy, in 1796, ib. 569.
- Campo Formio, account of the treaty of, v. 183. Reflections on the, ib. 185.
- Camus, Le, one of the French Commissioners detained by General Dumouriez, account of, iii. 431.
- Canada, Bill for regulating the government of, ii. 562. Renewed discussions on the, iii. 30, 50.
- Canning, Mr. maiden speech of, on the Subsidiary Treaty with the King of Sardinia, iv. 45. Delineates the features of the French government, ib. 47. Seconds the Address, at the opening of Parliament in the winter of 1794, ib. 235. Defends the conduct of Ministers, in the debate on Mr. Fox's motion for an inquiry into the state of the nation, in 1795 ib. 281. Ascribes the attack upon the King, in 1795, to the seditious doctrines previously disseminated at Copenhagen-house, ib. 427. Defends himself against the aspersions of Mr. Fox, respecting the removal of Mr. Aust in his favour, v. 137. Supports the Irish Union, vi. 137. Corrects certain misrepresentations of Mr. Whitbread, in the debate on the rejection of the First Consul's pacific overtures in 1799-1800, ib. 413.



- Appointed Treasurer of the Navy, on the change of Ministry in 1804, *ib.* 721.
- Canterbury, the Archbishop of, opposes the Catholic Petition, *vi.* 746.
- Cantons, the small Swiss, appeal to the French Directory against the alteration of their government, *v.* 526. Impolitic conduct of the, *ib.* 529. Conclude a treaty with France, and accede to the new constitution, *ib.* 530.
- Capitol, the Roman, the tree of liberty planted in, *v.* 566.
- Capua, surrender of, to the French, *vi.* 27.
- Cards, a new duty on, in 1801, *vi.* 584.
- Carlow, the town of, attacked by the rebels, *v.* 459.
- Carnot, account of the divisions in the French Directory by, in 1797, *v.* 180. 186.
- Carrier, execution of, *iv.* 216.
- Cartwright, Mr. moves for a grant of 40,000*l.* for the payment of Mr. Pitt's debts, *vi.* 817.
- Castlebar, defeat of Major-general Hutchinson at, by the French General, Humbert, *v.* 489.
- Castlecomer, the town of, attacked by the Irish rebels, *v.* 483.
- Castlereagh, Lord, supports the Union, in the Irish Parliament, *vi.* 159. Opposes Lord Corry's motion, in the Irish Parliament, for an inquiry into the state of the nation, *ib.* 232. Proposes eight resolutions, in favour of a Union with England, in the Irish Parliament, *ib.* 236. Carries his resolutions, by 158 against 115, *ib.* 247. Presents them at the bar of the House of Peers, *ib.* 252. Appointed Chief Secretary of Ireland, in 1801, *ib.* 585. Appointed President of the Board of Controul, on the change of Ministry in 1804, *ib.* 720. Defends the conduct of Government respecting the war with Spain, *ib.* 743.
- Castries, the Duke de, challenges and wounds Lameth, one of the revolutionists, *ii.* 509. The castle of, attacked and plundered, *ib.* 510.
- Catharine, Empress of Russia, writes to the King of Prussia, announcing her intention of supporting the Emperor of Germany against the Dutch, *i.* 208. Rejects the mediation of Great Britain, *iii.* 14. Refuses to renew the Treaty of Commerce with England, *ib.* 15. Signs a Commercial Treaty with France, *ib.* Avows her intention of interfering in the internal concerns of Poland, and of Turkey, *ib.* 15, 16.
- Catholic Committee (see Committee, Catholic)
- Catholic Emancipation (see Emancipation, Catholic)
- Catholic Petitions (see Petitions, Catholic)
- Catholics, the, remarks on the proposed indulgences to, at the time of the Union, *vi.* 544. 568. 600.
- Catholics, the Irish, obtain the elective franchise, &c. by the



- sanction of Parliament, v. 356. Animosity of the, towards the English, in the reigns of Elizabeth and Charles I. vi. 128. Attempts of the, to separate Ireland from England, ib. 132. Opposition of the, to the Union with England, ib. 234. Petition of the, presented to Parliament, ib. 745. Rejected in the Lords, by 129 against 49, and, in the Commons, by 336 against 124, ib. 750. 763.
- Catholics and Protestants, observations on the relative numbers of, in Ireland, vi. 241.
- Catholics, Roman, a bill passed in the House of Commons to allow, to act as officers in the Supplementary Militia, v. 163. The bill rejected in the House of Lords, ib. 164.
- Caulfield, Dr. strange conduct of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 469. Refuses to interfere to save the lives of the prisoners, ib. Bestows benedictions on the rebels, ib. 471. Accused of having directed the last battle in Wexford to be fought, ib. 475. Obtains a certificate of loyalty from Lord Cornwallis, ib. Denies that protections, granted by priests, were respected, ib. 478.
- Caulincourt, General, seizes the Duke D'Enghien at Ettenheim, vi. 723.
- Cazales, M. de, spirited conduct of, ii. 341. Arrest of, ib. 388.
- Century, the Eighteenth, state of affairs at the close of the, vi. 512. 536.
- Chambers, John, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Championnet, General, effects a revolution at Naples, vi. 28.
- Charette, M. signs a treaty with the French Government, on the part of the Vendéans, in 1795, iv. 351.
- Charles, the Archduke, defeats the French, in 1796, iv. 546. Retreat of, ib. 550, 551. Defeats General Jourdan at Kornach, ib. 557. Anecdote of the decisiveness of, ib. 569. Retreat of the, from the Tagliamento, in 1797, v. 175. Agrees to a suspension of arms with Buonaparté, ib. 179. Defeats General Jourdan, in 1799, and compels him to evacuate Suabia, vi. 317, 318. Effects a junction with General Hotze, and defeats the French at Winterthur, ib. 319. Attacks General Massena at Zurich, ib. Prevented, by secret orders, from pursuing an advantageous plan, in conjunction with General Korsakow, ib. 336. Returns to Germany with part of his army, ib.
- Charles II. asserted by Mr. Fox to have been a Papist, v. 125.
- Charlotte, Queen, mutiny in the, v. 139.
- Chartres, the Bishop of, joins the National Assembly, ii. 307.
- Chatham, Lord, remark of, respecting Mr. Pitt, i. 162. Appointed Master General of the Ordnance, in 1801, vi. 584. Ditto, in 1804, ib. 720.



- Chaumette, execution of, iv. 195.
- Chauvelin, M. the French Ambassador, writes to Lord Grenville, on the King's Proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, iii. 173. Falsehood of the statement of, exposed, ib. 174. Reproof of, by Lord Grenville, ib. 175. Complaint of, respecting the Alien Bill, ib. 304. Ordered to quit the kingdom, ib. 308. Dismissal of, justified, ib. 374. Letter of, to Lord Grenville, ib. 376. Intercourse of, with the Leaders of Opposition in England, ib. 377. The dismissal of, proved not to have been the cause of the war between England and France, vi. 418.
- Cheit Sing, Mr. Pitt's speech on the charge respecting, i. 314.
- Cherburgh, discussion as to the propriety of demanding the demolition of the French works at, i. 454.
- Chifflic Regiment, conduct of the, at the defence of Acra, vi. 291. 295.
- Chouans, the Leaders of the, enter into a treaty with France, and acknowledge the French Republic, iv. 351, 352.
- Christian, Professor, opinion of, respecting the act for suppressing seditious meetings, iv. 458.
- Christians, opinion of Dr. Horsley respecting, vi. 492. The Unitarians not entitled to the appellation of, ib.
- Christie, Thomas, extract from the letters of, on the French Revolution, iii. 153.
- Chronicle, Morning, a libel in the, on the House of Lords, v. 275.---Accused, by Lord Minto, of a systematic endeavour to undermine the Constitution, ib. 276.---Panegyricized by the Opposition, ib. 277.---Proprietor and printer of the, fined and committed to Newgate, ib. 279.---Extracts from the, (Appendix C.) v. 606.
- Church, rights of the, sacrificed in France, ii. 396.
- Cisalpine Republic, (See Republic, Cisalpine)
- Clare, Earl of, opposes the bill for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 356. Charges the Bishop of Killala with ignorance of the Constitution of both England and Ireland, ib. 357. Important speech of, exposing the impositions which had been practised upon Lord Moira, respecting the views of the Irish rebels, ib. 400. Proves the conduct of Government to have been universally conciliatory, ib. 402. Contrasts Lord Moira's present theory with his past practice, as relating to the execution of the rebel Haynes in America, ib. 425. Ascribes the increased violence of the disaffected to Lord Moira's speech in the British Parliament, ib. 427. A conspiracy formed to murder, ib. 452. Proposes, and carries, a string of resolutions in favour of the Union, in the Irish House of Peers, vi. 255. Appointed Lord Chancellor of Ireland, in 1801, ib. 585.
- Clare, the town of, attacked by the Irish rebels, v. 459.
- Clarence, the Duke of, opposes Lord Auckland's bill, for pre-



- venting an adultress from marrying her paramour, vi. 495. Remarks on the speech of the, ib. 496.
- Claviere, suicide of, iii. 506.
- Clerfayt, General, compels the army of Dumouriez to resort to defensive measures, iii. 419. Defeats Dumouriez at Nerwinde, and at Louvain, ib. 476. Masterly conduct of, iv. 182.
- Clermont, followed by a mob, attacks the residence of the Duke de Castries, ii. 509.
- Clermont, the Bishop of, advises Louis XVI. not to receive the Sacrament at Easter, iii. 79.
- Clergy, the French, join the Commons, ii. 342. Persecution of the Protestant, in Ireland, v. 305. Foreign, removal of, from Rome, ib. 574.
- Cliffden, Lord, moves an address to the King, on the meeting of Parliament in 1794, iv. 12.
- Clootz, Anacharsis, harangues the French National Assembly, ii. 499. Recommends a general revolution of the European States, iii. 221. Blasphemies and Execution of, iv. 195.
- Cloyne, the Bishop of, defended against the attacks of Mr. Orde and Mr. Curran, respecting the insurrection in Munster, v. 316.
- Club, Jacobin, interference of the, on the trial of the Brissotins, iii. 504. Dissolution of the, iv. 221. Establishment of a, in Rome, v. 573. Horrible proposition of one of the members of the, ib. 574.
- Coalition Ministry, (see Ministry, Coalition)
- Cobbett, Mr. account of, respecting the issue of Dr. Priestley's action for damages against the Hundred, for the demolition of his house, &c. iii. 71.
- Colclough, Mr. John, apprehension and execution of, v. 472. 474.
- Colonial Defence, (see Defence, Colonial)
- Colonies, Bill for fortifying the West India, ii. 237.
- Colony, check of General Humbert at, by Colonel Vereker, v. 489.
- Comartin, the Leader of the Chouans, apprehended by the French government, after the signature of a treaty of peace, iv. 353.
- Combe, Mr. Alderman, seconds Mr. Fox's motion, that Ministers had betrayed their trust, &c. in sending money to the Emperor of Germany without the authority of Parliament, v. 46. His ignorance of the duty of a member of Parliament exposed, ib. Moves an Address to the King, for the removal of Ministers, ib. 122. Loses his motion by 242 against 59, ib. 124.
- Commerce, temporary stagnation of, in England in 1793, iii. 436. Prosperous state of, in 1794, iv. 166. Great increase of English, v. 109. Flourishing state of, in 1798, vi. 31.
- Commercial Treaty, (see Treaty, Commercial)



- Commissioners, four French, detained as hostages by General Dumouriez, iii. 423. Character and conduct of the, ib. 431.
- Commissioners, Naval, a list of the, appointed under the administration of Earl St. Vincent, vi. 769. Publication of the tenth report of the, ib.
- Committee, the Irish Catholic, petition the Viceroy for a repeal of the restrictive statutes, v. 330. Schism in the, ib. 332. Nominated by the Irish National Convention, ib. 340. Appoint Mr. Burke's son their secretary, ib. 348. Proved to have interested themselves in favour of the Defenders, ib. 358. Oppose the establishment of the Yeomanry, ib. 382. Expend large sums in printing and circulating seditious pamphlets, ib. 389.
- Committee of Secrecy, (see Secrecy, a Committee of)
- Committee, Secret, of England, address of the, to the French Directory, vi. 98.
- Commons, augmentation of the House of, at the period of the Union, vi. 543.
- Commune, French, execution of 62 members of the, after the death of Robespierre, iv. 214.
- Commutation Act, the, proposed, i. 171.
- Condé, surrender of the garrison of, to the allies, iii. 485. Surrender of, to the French, iv. 184. Cowardice of the Commander of, ib.
- Condorcet, speaks in favour of war, iii. 223. Miserable death of, ib. 506.
- Confederacy, Northern, formation of the, vi. 513. 536. Statement of the principles avowed by the, ib. 537. The principles of the, proved to be incompatible with the maritime and commercial interests of Britain, and contrary to the established law of nations, ib. 540. Resistance of the, by Mr. Pitt, ib. Progress of the, ib. 615. Abandonment of the, by the King of Denmark, ib. 620. Dissolution of the, ib. 623.
- Conscriptions, severity of the French military, vi. 13.
- Conspiracy, the, of the Orleans faction, in France, ii. 405. A pretended, for the assassination of Robespierre, iv. 200. A treasonable, proofs of the existence of, in England, iv. 226. A seditious, detection of a, vi. 100. 109.
- Conspiracies, treasonable, Bill for detaining persons suspected of, iv. 133 to 151. The operation of, dreaded by the seditious clubs, iv. 150. Renewal of the Act for enabling his Majesty to detain persons suspected of, in 1800. vi. 482.
- Constitution, the new French, of 1795, iv. 366.
- Constitutional Society, (see Society, Constitutional)
- Consulate, establishment of the French, vi. 384. 390.
- Consuls, appointment of seven, in Rome, v. 571. The French, sentence 59 Members of the Opposition to be banished to Cayenne and the Isle of Oleron, but afterwards annul the sentence, vi. 389.



- Continent, state of the, i. 197. In 1786, ib. 273. In 1792, iii. 198. • On Mr. Pitt's return to power, in 1804, vi. 722.
- Contributions, Voluntary, for the defence of the country, iv. 54. v. 229. Debates respecting the legality of, iv. 54 to 73. Bill passed for carrying the measure of, into effect, ib. 73.
- Convention, a, concluded at Alkmaar, for the evacuation of Holland by the allied English and Russian army, in 1799, vi. 351. Between Great Britain, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, in 1801, ib. 623.
- Convention, British, proceedings of the, for Parliamentary Reform, iv. 8. A new British, projected, ib. 222.
- Convention, the French National, receive Addresses from the English Revolution Society, and other obscure societies, at Newington, Manchester, Norwich, and London, congratulating the French on the insurrection of the 10th of August, and imprecating the destruction of monarchy throughout the world, iii. 273, 274, 275. 278. 280. Receive the Address of the London Constitutional Society, accompanied by a present of 1000 pairs of shoes for the French soldiers, anticipating a National Convention in England, 280. Pass decrees for granting fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty, and for regulating the conduct of their generals in foreign countries, 319. Declare war against England and Holland, 345. Order the seizure of the church-bells, to be converted into cannon, and pass a decree, devoting the whole population of France to military purposes, 486. Resolve, that *Pitt is an enemy of the human race*, 499.
- Convention, the French National, decree, that if the Commanders of Valenciennes, Condeé, Landreçy, and Quesnoy, refuse to surrender at discretion within four-and-twenty hours after being summoned, they shall be put to the sword, iv. 182. Acknowledge the existence of a God, and the immortality of the Soul, 156. Pass a sanguinary decree, at the suggestion of Couthon, respecting capital offences, 201. Pass a decree of accusation against the two Robespierres, Couthon, St. Juste, and Lebas, 210. Declare Robespierre and his adherents out-laws, arm the Sections, and appoint Barras to command them, 212. Pass decrees to sanction the complete liberty of the press, and for suppressing all affiliating and corresponding societies, 217, 218. Restore 73 Brissotin deputies to liberty, 221. Frame a new Constitution, in 1795, 366. Enforce their decrees, by calling in military aid, 376. Break General Menou, for not forcing the Parisians to an unconditional compliance with their demands, 377. Employ Buonaparté, who



defeats the Parisians, 378. Dissolve themselves, 381. Adopt means to compel the people to re-elect two-thirds of the old members, 506.

Convention, the Irish National, assemble in Dublin, in 1792, v. 339. Send delegates to the King, ib. Appoint a committee of the Catholics of Ireland, ib. 340. are dissolved, ib.

Cooke, Mr. Edward, account of the pamphlet of, respecting the Irish Union, vi. 154.

Coote, Sir Eyre, assists in destroying the sluices of the Bruges canal, in 1798, v. 590.

Copenhagen, account of the battle of, in 1801, vi. 618.

Copenhagen House, connexion between the proceedings of the seditious meetings at, and the subsequent attack on the King, in 1795, iv. 426. 430.

Cordeliers, rise of the, in France, iv. 193. Attack the *Men of Blood*, ib. 194.

Cornick, Joseph, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.

Corn, scarcity of, in 1795, falsely attributed to the war, iv. 390. Bounty proposed for the importation of, in 1795, ib. 494. Mr. Nicholl's observations on the scarcity of, answered by Mr. Pitt. vi. 478. Scarcity of, in the year 1800, ib. 521. Reflections on the causes of the, ib. Riots occasioned by the, ib. Extracts from Mr. Brand's pamphlet respecting the, ib. 523. 531. Speech of the King, at the opening of Parliament, on the, ib. 525. Legislative measures proposed and adopted respecting the, ib. 527. 530.

Cornwall, Mr. re-chosen speaker of the House of Commons, i. 164. The Duchy of, revenues of the, appropriated to the payment of the Prince of Wales's debts, iv. 298, 299. Proposed, by Mr. Sheridan, to be sold, ib. 300.

Cornwallis, Admiral, memorable retreat of, from a superior French force, in 1795, iv. 382.

Cornwallis, Lord, succeeds Earl Camden in the Viceroyship of Ireland, v. 484. Excessive lenity of, in Ireland, vi. 5, 6, 7. Applauds the conduct of Lord Camden, his predecessor, ib. 6. Speech of, on the prorogation of the Irish Parliament, in 1798, ib. Circulates papers amongst the Irish Catholics, respecting the probability of their future emancipation, ib. 600. 607. Negotiates a treaty of peace, with Joseph Buonaparté, at Amiens, in 1802, ib. 637.

Cornwallis, Mr. seconds the address at the opening of the first Imperial Parliament, iv. 571.

Coronation Oath, (see Oath, coronation.)

Corporation and Test Acts, observations and debates on the proposed repeal of the, i. 375. Motion for the repeal of, rejected in the House of Commons, ib. 390. New motion for the repeal of, negatived, ii. 241.



- Correspondence, French, intercepted, vi. 23. Extracts from, relating to Buonaparté's return from Egypt, vi. 309, 310. 313. Traitorous, a bill for preventing, iii. 407. Debates on, ib. 409.
- Corresponding Society, (see Society, the London Corresponding.)
- Corrin, Father, conduct of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 469.
- Corsica, the French expelled from, by the English, iv. 187.
- Corsini Palace, (see Palace, Corsini.)
- Corry, Lord, motion of, in the Irish Parliament, for an inquiry into the state of the nation, negatived, by 123 against 103, vi. 232.
- Corry, Mr. fights a duel with Mr. Grattan, vi. 247. Appointed Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, in 1801, ib. 585. In 1804, ib. 721.
- Cos, Roger du, election of, as a member of the new French Directory, in June, 1799, vi. 361.
- Cottons, printed, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579. 584.
- Coulmier, the Abbé, infamous conduct of, ii. 333.
- Council, Aulic, injurious influence of the, on the Austrian army, iv. 603.
- Council of Elders, (see Elders, Council of.)
- Council of Five Hundred, (see Five Hundred, Council of.)
- Councils, the French, removal of, to St. Cloud, vi. 366, 367.
- Country, state of the, on Mr. Pitt's return to power, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Courier, a libel in the, accusing the British government of treating the French prisoners with cruelty, v. 280. Remarks, proceedings, and debates respecting, ib. 280 to 291.
- Courtenay, Mr. censures Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English Government*," as libellous, iv. 469.
- Couthon, sanguinary proposal of, in the National Convention, iv. 201.
- Cracow, the town of, taken by the King of Prussia, iv. 346.
- Crane, Elizabeth, deposition of, respecting the conduct of Dr. Caulfield, during the Irish rebellion, v. 471.
- Crevecœur, surrender of, to the French, by the cowardice and treachery of its commander, iv. 185.
- Criminals, account of the number of, executed in London and Middlesex, from 1749, to 1806. iii. 509. Ditto committed to the several Gaols in England and Wales for trial, in 1805 and 1806, ib. 517. Ditto, Swiss, heroically refuse to accept of liberty from the French, v. 524.
- Cumberland, the Duke of, opposes the Catholic Petition, vi. 746.



Cumming, George, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.

Curaçao, surrender of, to the English, in 1800, vi. 510.

Curran, Mr. eulogises the opponents of the Irish Commercial treaty, i. 271. Attacks the Bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet respecting the insurrection in Munster, v. 316.

Curwen, Mr. refutation of the unconstitutional doctrine of, that members of Parliament are bound to obey the instructions of their constituents, v. 124.

Custine, General, succeeds Dampierre in the command of the French Northern army, iii. 485.

Custom and Excise duties, plan for consolidating the, i. 369.

Cuthbert, Joseph, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.

Cyr, General St. promulgation of a law by, respecting loyal priests, v. 595.

#### D.

Daendels, General, evacuates the Helder, on the arrival of the English, in 1799, vi. 342.

Dagger, a, produced by Mr. Burke, in the House of Commons, iii. 307.

Daggers, manufactory of, at Birmingham, iii. 307.

Dalkeith, Lord, moves the address on the King's speech, at the opening of Parliament, in 1795, iv. 410. The address carried, ib. 415.

Dampierre, General, succeeds Dumouriez, in the command of the French army, iii. 485. Death of, ib.

Danican, General, commands the Parisians, against the conventional troops, on the 5th of October, 1795, iv. 380. Character of, v. 549.

Danton, infamous expression of, respecting the English sovereign, iii. 396. Execution of, iv. 195.

D'Antraigues, M. arrest of, by General Bernadotte, v. 543.

Danube, operations on the, in 1796, iv. 553. 558.

Darnley, the Earl of, supports the Catholic petition, vi. 746.

Moves for an inquiry into the state of the navy, with a view to vindicate the character of Earl St. Vincent, ib. 765.

Loses his motion, by 88 against 33, ib. 769.

David, the French painter, impiety of iv. 199.

D'Auch, Martin, refuses to take the Tennis Court oath, ii. 303.

Dauphin, opinion of the, respecting the writings of the French philosophers and economists, i. 436. The young, consigned to the care and instruction of Simon, a cobbler, iii. 501.

Dease, Father, declares that the Irish priests were encouraged to join the French, by Dr. Bellew, the Popish bishop of Kilalala, v. 488.



- Debate, freedom of, observations on the object and nature of, iv. 102.
- Debt, National, means for reducing the, i. 295.
- Declaration, the, of Austria, Prussia, and the French Princes, iii. 102.
- Defence, colonial, proposed increase of the means of, i. 463.  
National, proposed measures for, in 1798, v. 248. 251.
- Defenders, Irish, proceedings of the, v. 318. Remarkable clause in the oath of the, ib. 321. Determine to effect a revolution in Ireland, on French principles, ib. 330. Supported by the Irish Catholic committee, ib. 353.
- Dego, account of the battle of, in 1796, iv. 573.
- De Gross, a Swiss patriot, vain efforts of, v. 507.
- Delacroix, M. curious admission of, respecting the patriotism of the French, v. 16.
- Delegates, list of the Irish, in 1784, v. 302.
- Delinquents, Asiatic, provisions for the trial and punishment of, in Mr. Pitt's India bill, disapproved, i. 182.
- Denmark, at war with Russia, i. 450. The King of, proved to be a tool of Buonaparté, vi. 617. Abandons the Northern confederacy, in 1801, and renews his connexion with England, ib. 620. 623.
- Dennis, Serjeant, remarkable observation of, respecting a proposed relief of the Irish Papists, v. 297.
- Dent, Mr. pointed remark of, respecting the debate on the affairs of the Bank, v. 106.
- Denzinzano, defeat of the Austrians at, iv. 587.
- Derby, Lord, opposes Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy bill, iv. 151. Supports Lord Guilford's address respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, v. 88. Opposes Lord Minto's motion, for the fine and imprisonment of the printer and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, for a libel on the House of Lords, ib. 277.
- D'Erlach, a Swiss patriot, vain efforts of, v. 507. Murder of, by the Swiss, ib. 517.
- Desaix, General, masterly manœuvre of, at the battle of Marengo, vi. 503. Death of, ib. 504.
- Deseada, capture of, iv. 187.
- D'Espresmenil, execution of, iv. 191. Memorable reply of, to his fellow prisoner, Thourét, ib. 192.
- Devèse, M. de la, loyalty of, ii. 409.
- Dice, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 584.
- Dickson, Steele, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Dillon, General, murder of, by the French troops, iii. 285. False assertions of, ib. 267.
- Directeur, observations of the, on the victory of the Nile, vi. 11.



Directory, the French, institution of, in 1795, iv. 366. Answer of the, respecting a proposal from the British government, for peace, in 1796, 519. Defended by Mr. Fox, 527. 529.

Directory, the French, refuse to notice any indirect proposals from England, v. 11. Grant passports for Lord Malmesbury, 12. Demand specific propositions, 13. Equivocate with the English Minister, 14. Receive specific proposals from Lord Malmesbury, ib. Peremptorily demand the *ultimatum* of the British government, 18. Refuse to propose any terms, and order Lord Malmesbury to leave Paris, 19. Observations on the conduct of the, ib. Motives and object of the, explained. ib. Charge the British Cabinet with the rupture of the negotiation, 21. Project the invasion of Ireland, 168. Establish a correspondence with the Irish rebels, 168. 207, 208. Divisions in the, 180 to 194. Refuse to execute the treaty of Leoben, agreed to by Buonaparté, 181. Make peace with the Emperor of Germany, 183. Detect a conspiracy, 188. Transport several members of the Councils, 193. Grant passports for an English Minister to proceed to Lisle, to enter on a negotiation for peace, 196, 197. Insist upon the restoration of every conquest made by Britain upon France and her allies, 199. Object to the title of *King of France*, used by the King of England, 201. Receive Dr. M'Nevin, and — Lewins, as agents from the Irish rebels, 390. Dispatch an emissary to England, to ascertain the real state of Ireland, 391. Determine on subverting the constitution of Switzerland, 497. 501. Produce an insurrection in the Pays de Vaud, 505. Send General Menard to the assistance of the insurgents, ib. Insist on the dismissal of Mr. Wickham, the British Minister at Berne, 509. Disregard the appeal of the Swiss cantons, respecting the formation of the Helvetic Republic, 528. Resolve to break the treaty, agreed to by General Schauenburg, with the Swiss cantons, 530. Protract the negotiations at Rastadt, 539. Select Jean de Bry, as one of their plenipotentiaries, 540. Appoint Bernadotte ambassador at Vienna, 542. Resolve to render the Cisalpine Republic a province of France, 549. Send M. Trouvé ambassador to Milan, to frame a new constitution for the Cisalpines, 549. Cause the opponents of the new constitution to be thrown into prison, 550. Resolve to revolutionize Rome, 552. Change the constitution of the Batavian Republic, 576. Secure the citidel of Turin, and make a prisoner of the King of Sardinia, in his capital, 577. Determine on the expedition to Egypt, ib.

Directory, the French, depreciate Admiral Nelson's victory at Aboukir, vi. 11. Compare Admiral Nelson to Xerxes,



- Admiral Brueys to Leonidas, and Buonaparté to Themistocles, 12. Inforce a severe military conscription, 13. Perfidy and duplicity of the, in their communications with the Porte, exposed, *ib.* Publish an answer to the Turkish manifesto, issued after the battle of the Nile, 19. Falsehood of the, exposed by the intercepted correspondence, in 1798, 23. Extend the military conscriptions to the conquered countries, 25. Receive an address from Ashley, the agent of the seditious society of United Britons, 98. Object to the advance of the Russian troops to the aid of Austria, 315. Order an incursion into Suabia, and the country of the Grisons, without any previous notice, or declaration of war, *ib.* Unconstitutional proceedings of the, in 1798, 356. Violate the elective franchise, *ib.* Annul the returns of their opponents to the two councils, *ib.* Propose to confiscate the property of the transported deputies, 357. Hoot Rouchon, their opponent, out of the hall, 359. Pass a decree for confiscating the property of the transported deputies, 360. Excite prejudices against the English, *ib.* Misrepresent the battle of the Nile, *ib.* Hated by the people, *ib.* Turned out of office, with the exception of Barras, at the election in June, 1799, *ib.* Receive Buonaparté, in a flattering manner, on his return from Egypt, 362. Censured, for not putting Buonaparté on his trial, by a Court Martial, for leaving Egypt without orders, 365. Abolition of the, 384.
- Dissenters**, Protestant, a bill passed in the House of Commons, to allow, to act as officers in the Supplementary Militia, v. 163. The bill rejected in the House of Lords, *ib.* 164.
- Dock Yards**, the, Duke of Richmond's plan for fortifying, i. 288.
- Dolben**, Sir William, quotes Dr. Priestley's authority, in the House of Commons, to prove the danger to which the Church is exposed, i. 390. Introduces a bill for regulating the transportation of Negroes from Africa to the West Indies, i. 490.
- Domingo**, St. massacres at, iii. 217.
- Donauwert**, the bridge of, burnt by the Austrians, in 1796, iv. 554.
- Dorset**, the Duke of, vindicates the English government from the charge of fomenting the commotions in the French capital, ii. 390.
- Dowdall**, William, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Dowling**, Mathew, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Down**, the county of, defeat of the rebels in, v. 465.



- Downie, David, trial and execution of, iv. 224.
- Doyle, Major, seconds Mr. Knox's motion for the admission of Catholics in the Irish Parliament, v. 356.
- Drennan, Dr. extract from the letter of, to Lord Fitzwilliam, respecting the views of the Catholics, v. 395.
- Drummond, Mr. the English Minister at Copenhagen, quits the Danish court in 1801, vi. 616.
- Dublin, petition from the inhabitants of, for a reform in the Irish Parliament, rejected, i. 248. Prosecution of the Sheriffs of, in 1784, v. 300. Appeal of the Corporation of, to the Irish Protestants, in 1792, ib. 341. The Corporation of, opposes the Irish Union, vi. 156. Insurrection in, in 1803, ib. 736. Committee of Papists in, ib. 738. Proceedings of the Corporation of, against the Catholic petition, ib.
- Ducos, appointment of, as Consul, with Buonaparté and Sieyes, vi. 384. Accepts of a seat in the Senate, ib. 390.
- Duel, a, fought between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney, on Wimbledon Common, in 1798, v. 267. Ditto, between Mr. Grattan and Mr. Corry, vi. 247.
- Duff, General Sir James, defeats the rebels on the Curragh of Kildare, v. 460.
- Dufour, base flattery of Buonaparté, by, v. 522.
- Dugua, General, remarks of, on the conduct of Buonaparté, in deserting his post in Egypt, vi. 308. 314.
- Duigenan, Dr. opposes the introduction of Mr. Hobart's Bill for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 354. Accused by Mr. Plowden of bigotry against the Catholics, ib. 355. Remarks of, on the Popish College at Maynooth, ib. 387. Opposes the Catholic petition, vi. 750.
- Dumouriez, General, paid by the National Assembly for secret services, iii. 212. Proposes a conference with Lord Auckland, and with M. Von Spiegelhel, at the Hague, 343. Ordered, by the Convention, not to hold the proposed conference, 346. Inconsistent conduct of, 349. Resigns his situation in the French Cabinet, ib. Supposed to be the projector of the invasion of Holland by the French, 415. Issues a proclamation to the Dutch, 416. Enters Holland, 418. Defection of, 427. Resumes the command of the French army, 475. Attacks the Austrians at Nerwinde, where he is defeated with great loss, 476. Is again defeated at Louvain, and retreats towards the French frontier, ib. Proposes a negotiation with the Austrians, and holds a conference with Colonel Mack, 477. Lays down a plan for dissolving the French convention, and for restoring the constitutional monarchy, 478. Evacuates Holland and the Austrian Netherlands, 479. Ordered, by the Convention, to repair to Paris, ib. Seizes the four French Commissioners, sent to him from



the Convention, with Bournonville, the Minister of War, and delivers them up to the Austrians, 480. Issues a proclamation, expressive of his resolution to dissolve the Convention, *ib.* Fired at by a body of national guards, and flies to the Austrian quarters, 481. Returns to his camp, *ib.* Joins the Austrians with 1500 of his men, 482. Letter of, to Lord Auckland, 523.

Duncan, Admiral, defeats the Dutch fleet off the Texel, v. 171.

Dundas, Mr. produces the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the affairs of India, i. 47. Proposes resolutions, founded on the said report, 48. Opposes Mr. Fox's India Bills, 62. Moves an amendment to one of Lord Surrey's motions, 101. Moves for the restoration of the estates forfeited in Scotland, in consequence of the rebellion in 1745, 190. Introduces a Bill for improving the government of India, 320. Defends the right assumed by the Board of Controul, of sending troops to India, 470. 476.

Dundas, Mr. supports Mr. Pitt's plan of the Regency, ii. 168. Brings forward the Indian Budget for 1789, 250.

Dundas, Mr. opens the Indian Budget, in 1791, iii. 57. Proposes the *gradual* instead of the *immediate* abolition of the Slave Trade, 131. Exculpates the Warwickshire Magistrates from the charge of misconduct during the riots at Birmingham, 168. Opens the India Budget, in 1792, 186. Defends the conduct of Ministers, at the critical period of 1792, 295. Opposes Mr. Fox's amendment to the address to the throne, in consequence of the French declaration of war, 379. Opens the Indian Budget for 1793, 400.

Dundas, Mr. defends Ministers against the attacks of Messrs. Fox and Sheridan, iv. 20. Supports the Bill for embodying the French emigrants, and contends for the right of England to interfere with the government of other countries, when necessary for the security of its own, 84, 85. Brings down a royal message, respecting the seditious societies, 116. Corrects the false assertions of the Opposition, respecting the treatment of Messrs. Muir and Palmer, 138. Moves the previous question on Mr. Sheridan's motion for enabling Catholics to hold commissions in the army and navy, 155. Opens the Indian Budget, in 1794, 157. Asserted, by the Opposition, to have vacated his seat in Parliament, by accepting the office of Third Secretary of State, 235. Contradicts Mr. Sheridan's statement, that the Prince of Wales was ignorant of the contents of the royal message of 1787, respecting the payment of his debts, 296. Combats Mr. Fox's proposal, that the civil list should be granted annually by Parliament, 302. Resists Mr. Barham's motion, for the recall of certain proclamations, issued by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis,



- at Martinique; moves the previous question, and proposes, and carries, two resolutions, approving the conduct of those officers, 339, 340. Moves, as an amendment to Mr. Sheridan's motion for burning Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English Government*" by the common hangman, that the Attorney-general be directed to prosecute the author of the said pamphlet, 488. His amendment carried, 490. Supports Mr. Pitt's address of thanks to the King, for his message respecting a negotiation with France, in 1795, 499.
- Dundas, Mr. introduces a Bill for embodying a Scotch Militia, v. 30. Censures Mr. Fox's speech on the King's message, announcing the rupture of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation with France, in 1796, 86. Introduces a Bill to regulate the employment of the Volunteers, in 1798, 251. Introduces a Bill to enable the English Militia to serve in Ireland, 271.
- Dundas, Mr. presents various papers and documents to Parliament, relating to the detection of a seditious conspiracy, in 1799, vi. 100. Moves an address to the King, on the proposed Union between Great Britain and Ireland, 135. Carries his address without a division, 154. Answers Mr. Grey's objections against the Union, 218. Opens the debate, originating in the rejection of the First Consul's pacific overtures, and defends the conduct of Ministers, 412. Carries an address in favour of Ministers, by 265 against 64, 471. Commissioned to open the subject of Catholic emancipation to the King, 548. Fails in his attempt to alter the resolution of his Majesty, 549. 552. Defends and explains the conduct of Mr. Pitt's administration, down to the period of his resignation in 1801, 589. Created a Peer, by the title of Lord Melville, 611. Obtains an annuity from the East India Company, *ib.*
- Dundas, Mr. W. appointed Secretary at War, in 1804. vi. 721.
- Dunkirk, debates and observations respecting the disasters at, iv. 94 to 100. The Expedition against, censured, *ib.* 87. Motion for an inquiry into it, negatived, *ib.* 100.
- Dupont, M. speech of, proving Atheism to have been the first fruits of French liberty, iii. 306.
- Duphot, General, death of, v. 555. 557.
- Dupuy, General, death of, vi. 272.
- Durham, the Bishop of, account of the Bill of, for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, vi. 493. Supports Lord Auckland's Bill for that purpose, *ib.* 498.
- Dutch, the enmity of, towards England, i. 6. Open a negotiation with France, iv. 232. Ingratitude and cruelty of, to the English troops, *ib.* 254. Conclude a treaty with the French, in the winter of 1794-5, *ib.* Abolish the office of Stadtholder, *ib.* 255. Open the navigation of the Scheldt, *ib.* Resign their dock-yards to the French, *ib.*



Dutch Fleet, (see Fleet, Dutch)

Dutchmen, addresses of seditious, to the National Assembly of France, iii. 224.

D'Youval, Isabeau, admirable reproof of, to the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, iv. 192.

### E.

Economists, remarks on the writings of the French, i. 435. vi. 91.

Eden, Mr. moves a resolution in the House of Commons, that his Majesty would not, by the prorogation or dissolution of Parliament, interrupt the consideration of the affairs of the East India Company, i. 115. Moves an amendment to Mr. Powis's motion for a change of administration, ib. 139. Carries his amendment, by a majority of 20, ib. 140.

Edinburgh, seditious meetings holden at, iv. 7.

Effingham, Lord, moves two resolutions, in opposition to those which had been carried in the House of Commons, respecting the discretionary powers of the Lords of the Treasury, and the right of the King to choose his Ministers, i. 130. Carries his motion, by a majority of 47, ib. 132.

Effingner, a Swiss Senator, gallantry and death of, v. 520, 521.

Egan, Mr. accuses Ministers, during the debates on the Irish Union, of having "unfurled the flag of prostitution and corruption," vi. 252.

Egypt, the French expedition to, account of, v. 578. Sails from Toulon, ib. Captures the island of Malta, ib. 580. Arrives at Alexandria, ib. 582. 587. Transactions in, after the battle of the Nile, vi. 270. Affairs of, after the departure of Buonaparté, ib. 308. In 1800, ib. 510. Landing of a British force in, in 1801, ib. 625. Military operations in, ib. 627. 629. 632, 633. Final conquest of, by the English, ib. 634.

El-Arisch, action at, vi. 274. Wretched state of, at the return of Buonaparté to Europe, ib. 313. Account of the treaty of, ib. 510. Disapprobation of that Treaty, by the English Government, ib. 511. Final execution of it, ib. 512.

Elders, Council of, proceedings of the, after the return of Buonaparté from Egypt, vi. 367. Harangued by Buonaparté, ib. 368. Declare themselves the entire legislative body, ib. 378.

Eldon, Lord, supports Lord Auckland's Bill for preventing the marriage of an adultress with her paramour, vi. 498. Appointed Lord Chancellor, in 1801, ib. 584. Ditto, in 1804, ib. 720. Opposes the Catholic petition, ib. 746.

Elections, contested, Bill for explaining the Act respecting the trials of, i. 487.



- Elizabeth, trial and murder of the Princess, sister of Louis XVI. iv. 190.
- Ellenborough, Lord, defends the peace of Amiens, vi. 675. Opposes the Catholic petition, ib. 746.
- Elliott, Sir Gilbert, moves for the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, i. 502.
- Emancipation, Catholic, observations respecting, ii. 549. Treated with levity by Earl Fitzwilliam, iv. 323. Difference between the King and his Ministers, respecting, vi. 544. 549. 552. 568. 573. 604. Papers circulated by Lord Cornwallis, respecting, ib. 600. 607.
- Embargo, an, laid upon British shipping in the Swedish, Danish, and Russian ports, in 1801, vi. 615.
- Emigrants, French, Bill for embodying the, iv. 79. Debates respecting, ib. 79 to 88. Bill passed, ib. 88. Four hundred given up to the sword, at the surrender of Bois-le-Duc, ib. 185.
- Emmet, Mr. T. A. admits that the Irish rebels would not be satisfied with any concessions whatever, v. 398. Apprehension of, v. 449. Conveyed to Fort St. George, in Scotland, to be transported, ib. 486.
- Emmett, Robert, heads an insurrection in Ireland, in 1803, vi. 736.
- Enghien, the Duke D', gallantry of the, in 1796, 563. Murder of the, vi. 722. Remonstrance of Russia and Sweden respecting his murder, ib. 725.
- Enmity, reflections on the natural, subsisting between Great Britain and France, i. 324.
- Enniscorthy, the town of, taken by the rebels, v. 460. 467. Outrages committed at, ib. 467.
- Equality, new definition of, iv. 368.
- Erskine, Sir James, opens the fifth charge against Mr. Hastings, i. 419.
- Erskine, Mr. a motion of, carried, the object of which was to interfere with the prerogative of the Crown, i. 74. 82.
- Erskine, Mr. supports Mr. Sheridan's motion for repealing the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, iv. 250. Opposes the Bill for continuing the provisions of that act, 251. Censures Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English Government*," as libellous, 469. Supports Mr. Sheridan's motion for burning the said pamphlet by the hands of the common hangman, 490.
- Erskine, Mr. opposes Mr. Pitt's address on the King's message, announcing the rupture of the negotiation in 1796, contending that France was not the aggressor in the war, v. 79. Is suddenly taken ill, and prevented from delivering his intended speech, ib. Prints it, 80. Seconds Mr. Grey's motion for a reform in Parliament, 161. Neglects to notice



- Mr. Pitt's challenge, to repeat a certain libellous assertion, in the House of Commons, 290. Contradicted in his statements respecting the Irish rebels, by the depositions of the rebels themselves, 396.
- Erskine, Mr. censures Ministers for rejecting Buonaparté's pacific overtures in 1799, 1800, vi. 413. Arguments of, respecting the conduct of France, confuted by Mr. Pitt, 414, 415. 417, 418. 424. 426, 427. 442. 463, 464. Supports Sir H. Mildmay's Bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, 487. Opposes Lord Belgrave's amendment, on Mr. Nicholls' motion, respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, 655.
- Essen, General, incorrect report of, respecting one of the battles, during the Helder expedition, vi. 345.
- Estaing, the Count D', execution of, iv. 191.
- Estates, Scotch, a bill proposed for the restoration of, i. 190. Opposed by Lord Thurlow, ib. 193. Passed, ib. 194.
- Ettenheim, seizure of the Duke D'Enghien at, vi. 722.
- Ettlingen, the battle of, in 1796, iv. 550.
- Europe, cursory view of, previously to the birth of Mr. Pitt, i. 2.
- Excise and Custom Duties, plan for consolidating the, i. 369.
- Excise Laws, reflections on the extension of the, ii. 249.
- Exports and Imports, great increase of, in 1798, vi. 31. Calculations of Mr. Rose respecting, ib.

## F.

- Famars, Heights of, flight of the French from the, iii. 485.
- Famine, a, at Bengal and Bahar, i. 58.
- Fashion, disgraceful anecdote of an English woman of, respecting the duel between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney, v. 268.
- Fawkener, Mr. sent to the Continent as envoy extraordinary, to attend the negotiations for peace between Russia and Turkey, iii. 16.
- Fayette, M. de la, appointed commander of the city militia of Paris, ii. 380. Strange conduct of, at Versailles, ib. 415. Loses his influence over the mob, iii. 81. Conference of, with Mirabeau, ib. 86. The liberation of, moved for by General Fitzpatrick, in the English House of Commons, iv. 92.
- Fees, Commissioners appointed to examine the, at public offices, i. 241. Motion for, and debate respecting, an inquiry into. v. 129 to 138.
- Federates, French, atrocious conduct of the, iii. 254.
- Feldkirch, defeat of the French, at, in 1799, vi. 318.
- Ferrara, seizure of, by the French, v. 572.
- Ferrol, unsuccessful attempt on, in 1800, vi. 509.
- Feudal rights, annihilation of, in France, ii. 393.
- Finance, motion for a Committee to examine Mr. Pitt's statements on, negatived, i. 231.



- Finances, distressing state of the French, ii. 496.
- Fingal, Lord, incurs the resentment of the Irish Papists, v. 332. Voted out of the chair of the Catholic Committee, ib.
- Fitzgerald, Lord Edward, communicates with the French General, Hoche, respecting a descent on Ireland, v. 383. A reward offered for the apprehension of, ib. 452. Taken by Major Sirr, ib. 454. Dies of his wounds, in Newgate, ib. 456.
- Fitzgibbon, Mr. intrepid conduct of, in the Irish Parliament, v. 301. Introduces a Bill for the prevention of tumultuous assemblies, ib. 313. Created Earl of Clare, and made Chancellor of Ireland, ib. 318. Ineffectual attempt to assassinate, ib. 379.
- Fitzherbert, Mr. sent to Paris, to negotiate a treaty of peace with France, Spain, and Holland, i. 21. Sent as Ambassador to Madrid, ii. 487.
- Fitzherbert, Mrs. connection of, with the Prince of Wales, i. 395, 396. Reported marriage of, with his Royal Highness, ib. 396. 400. 403. ii. 172. Asserted not to be a Papist, i. 405. That assertion controverted, ib. 406.
- Fitzpatrick, General, motion of, to obtain the liberation of La Fayette, iv. 91.
- Fitzwilliam, Earl, appointed President of the Council, iv. 164. Appointed Viceroy of Ireland, in 1795, ib. 311. v. 375. Dismisses Mr. Beresford, and other faithful servants of the Crown, iv. 312. v. 376. His character of Mr. Beresford proved to be unjust, iv. 313. Receives Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, as his advisers, ib. 314. v. 375. Intends to emancipate the Catholics, iv. 315. Recalled, ib. 376. Institutes an inquiry in the House of Lords, on the subject of his recall, iv. 316. Replies to Lord Westmoreland, and eulogises Messrs. Ponsonby and Grattan, ib. 321. Reflections on the short administration of, ib. 332 to 337. Opposes the address of thanks to the King, for his message in favour of opening a negotiation with France, in the winter of 1795, ib. 500. Opposes the address, at the opening of the new Parliament, in 1796, on the ground that it was improper to treat with France until her hereditary monarchy should be restored, v. 23. Moves an amendment to the address, ib. 24. Loses his amendment, and enters a protest on the subject, ib. Censures Ministers for attempting to negotiate with France, ib. 88. Moves an amendment to the proposed address, respecting the rupture of the negotiation in 1796, ib. 90. Loses his motion, ib. 92. Protest of, against opening a negotiation for peace with France, (Appendix B.) ib. 600.
- Five Hundred, Council of, proceedings of the, after the return of Buonaparté from Egypt, vi. 371. Take a new oath of



- fidelity to the Constitution, *ib.* 372. Insulted by the hostile entrance of Buonaparté, *ib.* Forcibly attempt the life of Buonaparté, *ib.* 373. Driven from their Hall by Buonaparté, at the head of a troop of grenadiers, *ib.* 371. Re-assemble, and pass a vote of thanks to Buonaparté and his officers, *ib.* 379.
- Flanders regiment, the arrival of, at Versailles, to protect the royal family, *ii.* 407.
- Flanders, commencement of hostilities in, *iii.* 235. Maritime, overrun by the French, *iv.* 183.
- Fleet, Lord Howe's, defeats the French on the 1st of June, 1794, *iv.* 186. Mutiny in the, at Portsmouth, 1797, *v.* 138 to 148. Debate respecting the, *ib.* 148 to 150. Mutiny in the, at the Nore, in 1797, *ib.* 150 to 153. Debate respecting the, *ib.* 153 to 160.
- Fleet, Dutch, surrender of the, in 1799, to the English, *vi.* 343.
- Flesselles, M. de, murder of, *ii.* 370.
- Flood, Mr. moves for a reform in the Irish Parliament, *i.* 247, 248. His motion rejected, *ib.* 248. Opposes the Commercial Treaty between Britain and Ireland, *ib.* 265. Proposes a plan for Parliamentary reform, *ii.* 467.
- Flower, Benjamin, ignorance and presumption of, *iii.* 150.
- Fontainebleau, treaty of, between Austria and Holland, *i.* 276.
- Fonteniva, account of the battle of, *iv.* 594.
- Foreigners, persecution of, in France, *iii.* 499.
- Forest, General, death of, *vi.* 329.
- Forkhill, murder of an innocent family at, by the Papists, *v.* 323.
- Foster, the Lord Justice, ineffectual attempt to assassinate, *v.* 379.
- Foster, Mr. the speech of, on the commercial propositions in 1785, quoted by Mr. Pitt, in favour of the Irish Union, *vi.* 184. 188. Opposes the Catholic petition, *ib.* 756.
- Foulon, M. murder of, *ii.* 384.
- Fouquier Tinville, execution of, *iv.* 216.
- Fox, Mr. coalesces with Lord North, *i.* 24. Brings in his celebrated India bills, 51. Moves the order of the day, for the purpose of preventing Ministers from bringing forward their business, 90. Asserts the House of Commons to possess a right to negative the nomination of Ministers of State, 125. Proposes an address to his Majesty, for a change of administration, 141. Opposes Mr. Pitt's India bill, 185. Takes his seat in the House of Commons, as M. P. for Westminster, 212. Supports Mr. Pitt's motion for parliamentary reform, 224. Objects to certain parts of that plan, 225. Comparison of the abilities of, with those of Mr. Pitt, *ib.* Moves for a committee to investigate the financial statements of Mr.



Pitt, 231. Censures Ministers for their neglect of continental alliances, and for their conduct respecting the treaty of Berlin, 282. Recommends a closer connection with the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, 283. Suggests an improvement in Mr. Pitt's plan for a permanent Sinking Fund, 304. Charges Mr. Hastings with oppressive, tyrannical, and cruel conduct towards Cheit Sing, Rajah of Benares, 313. Opposes the commercial treaty between England and France, 328. 355. The anti-gallican principles of, commended, 332. Supports the motion for a repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, 390. Contradicts the report of a marriage having taken place between the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert, 399. Approves the conduct of Ministers, respecting their interference between France and Holland, 455. Opposes the treaty with Hesse Cassel, 461. Contends for the superiority of his India bill over that of Mr. Pitt, 473. Opposes the statements of Mr. Pitt, respecting the budget of 1788, 486. Proposes Mr. Francis as a member of the committee for conducting the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, 497.

Fox, Mr. asserts the Prince of Wales's right to the regency, ii. 24. 29. 87. Opposes Mr. Pitt's plan of the regency, 168. Objects to the army estimates of 1790, 431. Eulogises the French Revolutionists, 431. 433. 444. Answered by Col. Phipps, 432. Moves for the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, 446. Censures the convention with Spain, 512. Reprobrates the war with India, 544. Supports Mr. Mitford's motion for the relief of Roman Catholics, 558. Opposes Mr. Pitt's bill for regulating the government of Canada, 564. Reprobrates the establishment of hereditary honours, 566. Recommends the government of America, as a model for a good constitution, 569. Pronounces the French Revolution to be a *stupendous monument of human happiness*, 574.

Fox, Mr. denies having stated any republican principles, with regard to this country, iii. 10. Opposes the motion of Mr. Pitt respecting the Russian armament, 18. Pronounces another eulogy on the French Revolution, 24. Sends Mr. Adair to St. Petersburg, 26. Seconds Lord Sheffield's motion, against introducing dissertations on the French constitution, 36. Taxes Mr. Burke with inconsistency, and reminds him of his conduct in deploring the death of General Montgomery, 36. 38. Modifies some of his opinions respecting aristocracy, 50. Asserted to be a Whig only in name, 56. Opposes the usual address to the throne, at the opening of Parliament, 116. Advertises to the riots at Birmingham, and panegyricizes Dr. Priestley, 117. Answers Mr. Pitt, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and vindicates the Society of the Friends of the People, 147. Makes a motion in favour of Unitarian Dissenters, 156.



Refuses to accede to Mr. Pitt's proposals for a junction of parties, unless that gentleman will relinquish his situation, 191. Denies the existence of danger, resulting from the prevalence of French principles, 295. Renews his expressions of attachment to the principles and the patriots of France, 298. Moves an amendment to the Address to the Throne, at the opening of Parliament, 292. Moves for a negotiation with the French Republic, 299. 301. Condemns the trial and approaching murder of the French King, 301. Opposes the Alien bill, 304. Deprecates a war with France, and asserts the sovereignty of the people, and their right to cashier kings for misconduct, 334. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's Address to the Throne, in consequence of the royal message, announcing the French declaration of war, 373. Moves a set of resolutions, censuring ministers, and justifying France, 382. Censures the memorial which had been presented to the States General of Holland, 383. Misrepresentations of, on that subject, corrected, 386. Remarks on the intimacy of, with Chauvelin, 391. Resolutions of, negatived, by a great majority, 396. Censures the proposed erection of barracks, 398. Disavows the existence of plots and conspiracies, 402. Opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, 409. Censures the Memorial presented by Lord Auckland and the Austrian minister to the States General of Holland, respecting the French regicides, 427. Misrepresentations of, respecting the views of the combined powers, exposed and corrected, *ib.* Supports Mr. Grey's motion for a reform in Parliament, 461. Makes a motion for obtaining a peace with France, 462.

**Fox, Mr.** imputes the cruelties of the French government to the despotism of the monarchy, *iv.* 15. Asserts the pacific disposition of France, 17. Abuses the allies of Britain, 19. Insinuates that Louis XIV. attempted to overthrow the religious and political establishments of England, *ib.* Contradiction of that charge, in his *History of the early part of James the Second*, *ib.* Magnifies the defeats of the Allies, and depreciates their victories, *ib.* Moves, as an amendment to Lord Clifden's Address to the Throne, on the meeting of Parliament, in 1794, that his Majesty be recommended to treat for a peace with France, 20. That motion rejected, 35. Supports Mr. Harrison's motion, for the abolition of sinecure places, 76. Opposes the taxation of sinecure places, 77. Opposes the bill for embodying the French emigrants, 82. Prefers the revolutionary, to the monarchical, government of France, *ib.* Denies the right of England to interfere with the internal concerns of France, *ib.* Condemns the system of retaliation, 83. Instance of the duplicity and want of candour of, 85. Supports Gen. Fitzpatrick's motion, for the liberation of



Gen. La Fayette, 92. Defends the English seditious societies, approves of a convention, and opposes Mr. Pitt's motion for the detention of persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, 133. 141. Avows his preference of the most *unjust peace*, over the most *just war*, 141. Answered by Mr. Pitt, 142. Proposes a set of resolutions, condemning the war, and censuring the conduct of Ministers, 158. Contends for the impolicy of demolishing the system of Jacobinism, 159. Magnifies the resources of France, and depreciates those of England, *ib.* His motion lost, 163. Panegyricized by Mr. Sheridan, 166. Probable motives and designs of, 174. Conduct of, contrasted with that of Mr. Pitt, 175. Insists on the necessity of peace, and expresses his intention of instituting an enquiry into the causes of the war, which he imputes to the influence of a court party, and to an indifference in the Minister to the distresses of the people, 246. Supports Mr. Sheridan's motion, for repealing the Habeas Corpus Suspension act, 250. Opposes the bill for continuing the provisions of that act, 251. Objects to a proposed augmentation of the British army, in 1795, 256. Supports Mr. Grey's motion, for opening a negotiation with France, and ascribes the murder of Louis XVI. &c. to the confederated powers, 263, 264. Opposes the motion for a loan to Austria, 273. Moves for an enquiry into the state of the nation, 276. Ascribes the vitiated state of Ireland to the misconduct of Ministers, 278. Loses his motion, on the question of adjournment, by 219 against 63, 282. Supports Mr. Wilberforce's motion for peace, 288. Speaks of the King, as "*The Servant of the People*," and proposes that the civil list should be granted annually, by Parliament, 302. Compliments Earl Fitzwilliam respecting his conduct towards the Irish Catholics, 327. Censures Ministers for imputing the distresses of the French to the war, and not allowing those of the English to proceed from the same source, 408. Moves an amendment to Lord Dalkeith's proposed address, at the opening of Parliament, in 1795, expressive of the competence of the French government to make, and maintain peace, and proposing terms to be offered by this country accordingly, 410. Loses his amendment, 415. Opposes the Pitt and Grenville bills for the prevention of treason and sedition, 424. 441. 445. Asserts it to have been the design of the House of Stuart to restore popery in England, 432. Supports a contrary opinion, in his history of James II. *ib.* Supports Mr. Sheridan's motion, for burning Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English Government*," by the hands of the common hangman, 490. Supports Mr. Sheridan's amendment to Mr. Pitt's motion for an address of thanks to the King, respecting a negotiation for peace, 499.



Supports Mr. Grey's motion, for compelling Ministers to commence a negotiation, 518. Supports Mr. Grey's motion for the impeachment of Ministers in 1796, 526. Censures the conduct of Ministers, in their proposals to open a negotiation with the French government, *ib.* Justifies the objections of the Directory, 527. 529. Insists on the necessity of a change of Ministers, 532. Declares his intention of never accepting a place, unless all the leading principles and maxims, which had been adopted by government, and by Parliament, during the war, should be retracted, 534. Proposes a string of resolutions, condemning the conduct of Ministers, 535. 605. Loses his motion, by 216 against 42, 543.

Fox, Mr. congratulates Ministers, at the opening of the new Parliament, in 1796, on the projected negotiation with France; and promises universal support to the war, if the French should refuse just and reasonable terms of peace, v. 25. Objects to Mr. Pitt's proposal for raising a Supplementary Militia, 29. Calls for the impeachment of the Minister, for transmitting money to the Emperor of Germany, without the authority of Parliament, 32, 33. Opposes the supplies, and charges Mr. Pitt with a breach of the constitution, 33. Loses his motion, for stopping the supplies, by 164 against 58, 45. Moves, that Ministers had betrayed their trust, and violated the constitutional privileges of the House, 46. Loses his motion, by 285 against 81, 78. Opposes Mr. Pitt's address, on the King's message, announcing the rupture of the negotiation with France, 80. Defends the conduct of France, 81. Declares no peace can be concluded without a change of system and of Ministers, 82. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's Address, 83. Loses his amendment, by 212 against 37, 87. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion, for the appointment of a Secret Committee to investigate the affairs of the Bank, and accuses him of having ruined the nation, 102. Censures the order in council, stopping the payment of cash at the Bank, 103. Contends, that payment in notes is no payment at all. Moves for a repeal of the new treason and sedition acts, 125. Asserts Charles II. to have been a papist, *ib.* Threatens the Scotch judges, *ib.* Panegyricizes Gerald, who had been transported for sedition, 126. Loses his motion, by 260 against 52, 128. Supports Mr. Harrison's motion for an inquiry into sinecure places and fees of office, and charges Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville with taking sinecure places for themselves, 135. Censures the removal of Mr. Aust to make way for Mr. Canning; and attacks Mr. Rose for receiving the salary of Clerk to the House of Lords, while the duty was performed by deputy, and for securing the reversion for his son, 136. Charged by Mr.



Rose, with selling two sinecure places, to pay a gaming debt, 137. Censures Mr. Pitt, respecting the mutiny at Portsmouth, 148. Supports Mr. Grey's motion for a reform in Parliament, 161. Withdraws from Parliament, 215. Observations on the assigned reasons of, for that measure, *ib.* Returns to Parliament, to oppose the Income Tax, 219. 221. Refuses to vote for the supplies, till ministers should be dismissed, 219. Defends his secession from Parliament, 221. Draws false conclusions, respecting the Irish insurgents, 393, 399. Assertions of, contradicted by the declarations of the rebels themselves, 395.

Fox, Mr. condemns Mr. Pitt, for not having given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the pacific overtures of Buonaparté, in 1798, 1800, *vi.* 470. Approves the treaty of peace between England and France, in 1801, 645. Opposes Lord Belgrave's amendment on Mr. Nicholls' motion respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, 655. Votes for Mr. Pitt's proposed inquiry into the conduct of the Admiralty, 696. Moves for a revision of the several bills respecting the defence of the nation, in 1804, 707. Loses his motion, by 256 against 204. 703. Objected to, as a minister, by the King, 709. Censures the conduct of ministers, respecting the dispute with Spain, in 1804, 743. Supports the Catholic petition, 750. Opposes the postponement of Mr. Whitbread's motion for removing Lord Melville from his Majesty's councils, 775. Opposes the proposal to substitute an impeachment, instead of a criminal information, against Lord Melville, 795.

France, peace concluded with, *i.* 22. Insidious conduct of, relating to the disturbances in Holland, *ib.* 205. 430, 445. Exaggerated statement of the population of, *ib.* 352. Affairs of, in 1788. *ii.* 2. In 1789, *ib.* 251. After the murder of the King, *iii.* 468. In 1794, *iv.* 179. In 1799, and 1800, *vi.* 355. Military affairs relating to, *iii.* 259. True picture of, after the murder of the King, *ib.* 492. English expedition to the coast of, *iv.* 51. Enormous expenditure of, in the early years of the revolution, *ib.* 244. Makes peace with Spain, *ib.* 350. Acquires the Spanish part of the island of St. Domingo, *ib.* Enters into a treaty with the leaders of the Vendéans and Chouans, *ib.* Violates the treaty, *ib.* 353.

France, the King of, opposes the democratic party in Holland, *i.* 433. Holds a bed of justice, *ib.* 442. *ii.* 15. Banishes the members of the French parliament, *i.* 443. Recalls them from exile, *ib.* 444. Determines to assist the Dutch malcontents, *ib.* 446. Relinquishes that design, *ib.* 450. (See Louis XVI.)

France and Holland, treaty of alliance and commerce between, *i.* 278.



- Francis, Mr. moves for the appointment of a committee, to consider the establishments of the East-India Company in India, i. 238. Eulogises the Antigallican principles of the late Lord Chatham, ib. 360. Rejected as a member of the committee for conducting the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, ib. 497. Makes a motion, impeaching the legality of voluntary contributions, for the defence of the country, iv. 58.
- Fraubrunnen, heroism of the women of, v. 520.
- Frederick II. King of Prussia, death of, i. 430. His title to the appellation of *Great* disputed, ib.
- Frederick William, King of Prussia, conduct of, towards Holland, i. 431, 432. 445.
- Frejus, arrival of Buonaparte at, on his return from Egypt, vi. 361.
- French, the, pass the Waal, on the ice, in December, 1794, iv. 253. Amount of the forces of the, at the opening of the campaign in 1796, ib. 544. 570. Losses of the, during the Italian campaign of 1796, ib. 601. Guards, treachery of the, ii. 357.
- Freron, procures a decree to be passed, in the French convention, to sanction the complete liberty of the press, iv. 217. Attacks the Jacobin club, and occasions its dissolution, ib. 220.
- Friends of the People, society of the, established for the purpose of procuring a reform in Parliament, iii. 135. Vindicated by Mr. Fox, ib. 147. Censured by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and the Marquis of Abercorn, ib. 148, 149. 183.
- Fribourg, capture of, by the French, v. 517.
- Frisching, a magistrate of Berne, effect of disappointed ambition on, v. 503.
- Frondeville, the President, speech of, in the National Assembly, ii. 507. Prints his speech, ib. 508. Imprisoned in his own house, ib. 509. Challenged by the Duke of Orleans, ib.
- Frost, John, seditious conduct of, iii. 278.
- Fullarton, Colonel, opposes Mr. Fox's motion for the repeal of the new treason and sedition acts, v. 127.
- Fund, Sinking, proposal of Mr. Pitt for the establishment of a permanent, i. 296. Debates on the, in Parliament, ib. 300.

## G.

- Garat, the French envoy at Naples, insolence of, vi. 26.
- Gardner, Admiral, risks his life, by threatening the mutineers of the Queen Charlotte, v. 147.
- Gerald, J. trial of, for sedition, iv. 9. Eulogy on, by Mr. Fox, v. 126.
- German Princes. (See Princes, German.)
- Germany, Joseph, Emperor of, entertains projects of reform, i. 197. Leopold projects the restoration of Louis XVI. iii. 91. Francis



- takes the command of the allied army, in April, 1794. iv. 881. Directs a general attack on the enemy, ib. 182. Proposed subsidy to the, in 1800, vi. 471. 480. Disavows the treaty signed by Count St Julien, and refuses to conclude any treaty with France, not including England, vi. 506. Sues for peace, ib. 507. Signs the treaty of Luneville, in 1801, ib. 508. Renewal of military operations in, in 1800, vi. 507.
- Geneva, extract from the report of Brissot, respecting the convention with the people of, v. 498.
- Genoa, surrender of, to the Austrians, vi. 503.
- Gertruydenberg, surrender of, iii. 419.
- Ghezzar Pacha, orders all the French, at Acra, to be imprisoned, vi. 273. Rejects the proffered friendship of Buonaparte, ib. 284. Instance of the attachment of, to the English, ib. 290, 291.
- Giffard, Mr. John, the High Sheriff of Dublin, spirited conduct of, at the commencement of the rebellion, v. 370.— Assists in the seizure of the books and papers of a society of United Irishmen, ib. Resolutions proposed by, against the Catholic petition, in Dublin, vi. 738. Dismissed from his office in the customs, by Lord Hardwicke, for proposing those resolutions, ib. 739.
- Girondists, the, headed by Brissot, iii. 472. 492. Means taken for the destruction of the leaders of the, ib. 497.
- Glandore, the Earl of, moves an address, in the Irish Parliament, on the Union with England. vi. 158.
- Glar, a Swiss woman, extraordinary heroism of, v. 520.
- Glaris, the canton of, appeals to the French Directory, against the alteration of its government, v. 526.
- Glass, new duty on, iv. 50.
- Glenbervie, Lord, appointed one of the paymasters of the forces, in 1801, vi. 584.
- Gloves, repeal of the tax on, iv. 50.
- Gloucester, the Duke of, deprecates the discussion of the question of right, respecting the Prince of Wales's claim to the regency, ii. 46.
- Gloucester, Prince William of, gallantry of, in the Helder expedition, vi. 349.
- Gohier, election of, as a member of the new French Directory, in June, 1799, vi. 361. Orders Lefebvre to surround the house of Buonaparte with Directorial guards, ib. 366. Is arrested, ib. 367.
- Good Hope, capture of the Cape of, in 1795, iv. 383.
- Goree, surrender of, to the English, in 1800, vi. 510.
- Grandchamp, the town of, invested by the French royalists, who are surprised and defeated, iv. 353.
- Grant, Mr. supports the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing treason and sedition, iv. 454.



Grant, Sir William, argues against the idea of the sovereignty of the people, vi. 228. Appointed Master of the Rolls, in 1801, ib. 585.

Grattan, Mr. opposes the Irish commercial treaty, i. 265.— Instance of the inaccuracy of, relating to the three estates of the realm, ii. 214. Received as the adviser of Earl Fitzwilliam, iv. 314. v. 375. Introduces a bill in the Irish Parliament, for emancipating the Catholics, iv. 315. The bill rejected, ib. 316. Reflections on the political conduct of, ib. 321, 322. Enlogised by Earl Fitzwilliam, ib. Violently attacks the established church, on the subject of tithes, v. 305. 307. Opposes Mr. Fitzgibbon's bill for the prevention of tumultuous assemblies, ib. 313. Misrepresents the English riot act, ib. Encourages the Catholics to demand their emancipation, ib. 375. Publishes a factious address to the citizens of Dublin, ib. 376. Censures the measures of Government for quelling the Irish insurgents, and describes those of Ulster as peaceable and loyal subjects, ib. 385. Has an interview with Hughes and Neilson, two of the rebel leaders, ib. 444. Violently opposes the Irish Union, vi. 245. Devotes the British ministers to "an immortality of eternal infamy," ib. 246. Fights a duel with Mr. Corry, ib. 247.— Supports the Catholic petition, ib. 752.

Gradiska, cowardly surrender of, in 1797, v. 175.

Graves, Admiral, sails with the expedition to the Baltic, in 1801, vi. 617.

Grenville, Lord, reproves M. Chauvelin for his interference in the internal regulations of the English government, iii. 175. Supports the New Forest timber bill, against the attacks of Lord Thurlow, 189. Opposes the motion of the Marquis of Lansdowne, for sending an ambassador to France, to prevent the murder of the King, 302. Moves a resolution, approving the sentiments contained in Lord Auckland's memorial to the States General of Holland, respecting the French regicides, 430.

Grenville, Lord, moves that the resolution of Earl Stanhope, proclaiming Kings to be a curse upon mankind, be expunged from the journals of Parliament, iv. 104. Carries his motion unanimously, ib. Supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy bill, 151. Moves an amendment to a motion for opening a negotiation with France, 265. Announces to the Peers the attacks which had been made upon the King, in proceeding to, and returning from, the Parliament-house, in 1795, 402. Introduces a bill, for the safety of the King's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices, 415.

Grenville, Lord, applies to M. Delacroix, the French minister for foreign affairs, for passports for a British



- envoy, to treat of peace, v. 11. Charged by Mr. Fox with taking sinecure places for himself, 135. Defends the Church of England against the charge of persecution, advanced by the Duke of Norfolk, 163. Transmits a proposition for peace to M. Delacroix, 195. Moves an address, respecting the rupture of the negotiation at Lisle, which is adopted as the joint address of both Houses, 209.
- Grenville, Lord, supports the Income Tax, vi. 80. Receives a note from Talleyrand, inclosing a letter from Buonaparte to the King of England, 395. Answers Buonaparte's letter, 400. Receives a farther communication from Talleyrand, on the subject of peace, 406. Transmits the final answer of the British cabinet on that subject, 408. Defends the conduct of ministers in Parliament, 409. Carries his motion for an address, in opposition to the Duke of Bedford's, with only six dissentient voices, 411. Supports Lord Auckland's bill for preventing an adulteress from marrying the object of her criminal attachment, 498. Announces the intended resignation of ministers, in consequence of a difference with his Majesty, on the question of Catholic emancipation, 573. Promises to support Mr. Addington's administration, 586. Obtains a pension on his resignation, 611. Accords with Mr. Windham, in condemning the treaty of Amiens, 649. Refuses to come into office, at the change of ministry, in 1804, without Mr. Fox, 709. 713. Letter of, sent to Mr. Pitt, on the subject, 710. Reflections on the letter and conduct of, on this occasion, 713. Supports the Catholic petition, 746.
- Grenville, Mr. W. introduces a bill, explanatory of the act respecting the trials of contested elections, i. 487. Supports the propositions of Mr. Pitt respecting the regency, ii. 150.
- Grenville, Mr. appointed secretary of state for the home department, in 1789, ii. 241.
- Grenville, Mr. Thomas, sent to Paris with overtures for peace, i. 15. Makes a motion respecting the interference of England between Russia and Turkey, iii. 24.
- Grey, Mr. in his maiden speech, opposes the address to his Majesty, on the treaty of commerce between Great Britain and France, i. 362.
- Grey, Mr. opposes Mr. Pitt's plan of regency, ii. 168.— Moves for a committee on the state of the nation, ib. 572.
- Grey, Mr. proposes a set of resolutions, disapproving the address which had been voted respecting the Russian armament, iii. 19. Gives notice of a motion, proposed to be made in the ensuing session, for a parliamentary reform, 136. Answered by Mr. Pitt, ib. Opposes the address of the Master of the Rolls, relating to the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, and proposes an amendment, 178. Vindictively inveighs against Mr. Pitt, 180. Moves a set of resolutions,



similar to those proposed by Mr. Fox, respecting the war with France, which are negatived without a division, and without a debate, 397. Proposes a plan of parliamentary reform, 438. His motion negatived, 461.

Grey, Mr. moves, that to employ Foreign troops in England is contrary to law, iv. 52, 53. Vindicates the conduct of the seditious societies, and opposes Mr. Pitt's motion for the detention of persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, 135, 136. Accuses Mr. Pitt of duplicity and apostacy, 137. Opposes the bill for continuing the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, 251. Moves for opening a negotiation with the French, in 1795, 257. Loses his motion, by 269 against 86, 264. Moves, that the existing government of France is competent to make peace with England, 273. Loses his motion, by 190 against 60, 274. Opposes Mr. Barham's motion for the recal of certain proclamations, issued by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, at Martinique, 338. Opposes the Pitt and Grenville bills, for the prevention of treason and sedition, 424, 451. Supports Mr. Sheridan's amendment to Mr. Pitt's motion for an address of thanks to the King, respecting a negotiation for peace, 499. Moves an address to the King, for the purpose of compelling ministers to open a negotiation with the French government, in 1796, 516. Loses his motion, by 189 against 50, 518. Moves a string of resolutions, on which to ground the impeachment of Ministers, 526. Loses his motion, by 200 against 38, ib.

Grey, Mr. coincides with Mr. Fox, in censuring ministers for transmitting money to the emperor of Germany, without the previous authority of Parliament, v. 44. Supports Mr. Fox's amendment, on the King's message, announcing the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, 87. Moves a string of resolutions against ministers, respecting the stoppage at the Bank, 111. Loses his motion, by 206 against 60, 122. Moves for a reform in Parliament, 160. Accuses Mr. Pitt of inconsistency, on the subject of parliamentary reform, ib. Loses his motion, by 256 against 92, 344.

Grey, Mr. supports Mr. Sheridan's resolutions against the Irish Union, vi. 217, 218. Moves an amendment against Mr. Pitt's address in favour of the Union, 260. Loses his motion, by 236 against 30, 263. Opposes the address, on the opening of the first Imperial Parliament, 571. Moves for an inquiry into the state of the nation, on the change of ministry, in 1801, 588. Condemns the whole of Mr. Pitt's administration, ib. Opposes Lord Belgrave's amendment, on Mr. Nicholl's motion respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, 655. Obtains a majority, in one of the stages of Mr. Pitt's Army of Reserve bill, by a



- party manœuvre, 731. Opposes Mr. Pitt's resolutions respecting the Spanish papers, 742. Loses his proposed amendment, by 313 against 106, 743.
- Grey, Sir Charles, accused of avarice and inhumanity, at Martinique, iv. 338.
- Grisons, the, entrance of the French into, and expulsion from, in 1799, vi. 316. 319.
- Grosvenor, Mr. moves a resolution of Parliament, that the King's ministers are not entitled to the confidence of the people, i. 124.
- Grogan, Cornelius, execution of, v. 474.
- Guadaloupe, capture and re-capture of, iv. 187.
- Guards, French, treachery of the, ii. 357.
- Guiccardini, application of his character of Pope Leo X. to Buonaparté, vi. 282.
- Guildford, Lord, opposes the Alien bill, iii. 304. Opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, ib. 411. Moves an amendment to Lord Stair's address to the throne, on the meeting of Parliament, in 1794, similar to that of Mr. Fox, in the House of Commons, iv. 35. Loses his motion, ib. 36. Moves the same address in the Upper House that Mr. Fox had moved in the Lower, respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, v. 87. Loses his motion, by 86 against 8, ib. 88.
- Guillotine, the, numerous executions by, during the reign of terror, iv. 188. Seditious definition of a, ib. 437.
- Gunpowder, &c. the importation, removal, or keeping of, prohibited in Ireland, v. 362.
- Gustavus, King of Sweden, assassination of, iii. 207.

## H

- Habeas Corpus Act, suspension of, since the revolution, iv. 139. Dreaded by the seditious clubs, iv. 150.
- Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, attacked by the Opposition, iv. 233. Repeal of the, moved by Mr. Sheridan, ib. 247. A bill brought in to continue the provisions of the, ib. 250. Opposed by Messrs. Lambton, Jekyll, Erskine, Fox, and Grey, ib. 251. Supported by the Attorney-General, ib. Passed, ib. 253.
- Hair-Powder, licences for wearing, proposed in 1795, iv. 275.
- Hamburgh, seizure of, by the Danes, in 1801, vi. 616.
- Hanover, invasion of, by Prussia, in 1801, vi. 617.
- Hardy, Thomas, seditious conduct of, iii. 275. Committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116. Trial of, for high treason, ib. 224. Acquittal of, ib. 225.
- Hardwicke, Earl, appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in 1801, vi. 585. Dismisses Mr. Giffard, from an office in



- the customs, for opposing the petition of the Irish Catholics, vi. 739.
- Harris, Lieut.-gen. besieges and takes Seringapatam, vi. 305, 306.
- Harrison, Mr. motion of, for abolishing places and pensions, iv. 73. Debates and observations on that motion, ib. 73 to 78. Motion lost, ib. 78. Moves for an inquiry into sinecure places, and fees of office, v. 129. Loses his motion, by 169 against 77, ib. 138.
- Harrowby, Lord, appointed one of the Secretaries of State, in 1804, vi. 720. Proceeds to Berlin, with the view of inducing the King of Prussia to accede to the confederacy against France, ib. 800.
- Harvey, Mr. Bagnal, apprehension and execution of, v. 472. 474. Deceived by the artifices of the rebels, ib. 476. Acknowledges, that the Popish priests were deeply concerned in the rebellion, and that the extirpation of Protestants was their main design, ib. 480.
- Hastings, proceedings of Mr. in India, i. 45. Resolution passed in the House of Commons for the recal of, ib. 49. Accused of high crimes and misdemeanors by Mr. Burke, ib. 308. 311, 312. Defends himself against those charges, ib. 313. Charged with confiscating the treasures of the Princesses of Oude, ib. 412. Charged with corrupt and oppressive conduct towards the Nabob of Furruckabad, ib. 416. Impeached by the House of Commons, ib. 423. Commencement of the trial of, ib. 496. Adjournment of, ib. 500. Account of the expences of, moved for, and produced, ib. 501. The impeachment of, continued by the new Parliament, in 1791, ii. 544. Honourable acquittal of, on every charge, iv. 341. Reflections on the trial of, ib.
- Hawkesbury, Lord, introduces a bill for enforcing the navigation laws, iv. 155. Supports Mr. Pitt's resolutions, in favour of the Irish Union, vi. 217. Appointed Secretary of State, for the Foreign department in 1801, ib. 584. Enters into a negotiation for peace, with M. Otto, ib. 635. Signs the preliminaries of peace, ib. 636. Delivers a judicious answer to the complaints of Buonaparté, respecting the licentiousness of the British press, ib. 662. Appointed Secretary of State for the home department, at the change of ministry, in 1804, ib. 720. Opposes the Catholic Petition, 746.
- Hay, John, a rebel leader, execution of, v. 472.
- Haynes, Isaac, account of the execution of, in America, v. 425. Parliamentary proceedings respecting that execution, ib. 426.
- Hebert, execution of, iv. 195.
- Helder, account of the British expedition against the, in 1799, vi. 341.



- Helens, Lord St. proceeds to St. Petersburg, as Minister Plenipotentiary, in 1801, and concludes a convention between Great Britain and Russia, vi. 623.
- Helvetic Republic, (see Republic, Helvetic.)
- Henriot, commander of the French National guard, arrest of, ordered by the Convention, iv. 209. Thrown out of a window, ib. 213.
- Herbert, Mr. a Swiss senator, death of, v. 521.
- Hesse Cassel, subsidiary treaty with the landgrave of, i. 452. 461.
- Hesse Philipstadt, the Prince of, cowardice and treachery of, iv. 185.
- Hessian troops, royal message to Parliament, on the landing of the, iv. 52.
- Higgenbottom, John, affidavit of, respecting the conduct of Dr. Caulfield, and of certain Catholic priests during the Irish rebellion, v. 476.
- Hill, Sir George, activity of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 385. Opposes the Catholic Petition, vi. 762.
- Hobart, Mr. introduces a bill into the Irish Parliament, for granting the elective franchise, and other privileges, to the Papists, v. 350. Inaccuracy of the statements of, on the subject, exposed, ib. 351. Carries the measure, in both Houses, ib. 356, 357.
- Hobart, Lord, supports Lord Auckland's Bill for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, vi. 498. Appointed one of the Secretaries of State, in 1801, ib. 584.
- Hobhouse, Mr. opposes Sir H. Mildmay's Bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487.
- Hoche, General, account of, v. 199. Communicates with Lord E. Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor, respecting a descent of the French, on Ireland, ib. 383.
- Hodgson, Richard, charged with high treason, iv. 224.
- Hohenlinden, account of the battle of, in 1800, vi. 507.
- Holland, domestic dissensions in, i. 204. 281. 429. 432. 445. The invasion of, supposed to have been projected by Dumouriez, iii. 415. Entered by the army of that General, ib. 418. Account of the British expedition against, in 1799, vi. 341. Parliamentary discussion respecting the failure of the expedition against, ib. 482.
- Holland and Austria, hostilities between, i. 206. 209. Treaty between, ib. 276.
- Holland and England, treaty of defensive alliance between, i. 502, 532.
- Holland and France, treaty of alliance and commerce between i. 278.
- Holland, Lord, opposes the income tax, v. 224, vi. 80.



- Objects to the Irish Union, vi. 257. Defends the First Consul, and arraigns the conduct of the English ministers, ib. 410. Loses a motion, for inquiry into the cause of the failure of the expedition against Holland, ib. 482. Supports the Catholic Petition, ib. 746.
- Hood, Lord, takes his seat in the House of Commons as M. P. for Westminster, i. 212. Defends Mr. Hastings against the charge respecting the Nabob of Furruckabad, ib. 416. Charged, by Major Maitland, with obtaining possession of Toulon by false pretences, with presenting four ships of the line to the enemy, and with making a shameful retreat, iii. 95, 96. Defended by Mr. Pitt, ib. 99.
- Horses, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579.
- Horsely, Bishop, opposes Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 491. Supports Lord Auckland's bill for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, ib. 498.
- Hostilities, suspension of, between France, Austria, and Prussia, iii. 263.
- Hotel des Invalides*, the, attacked and plundered, ii. 361.
- Hotham, Admiral, defeats the French fleet in the Mediterranean, iv. 382.
- Hotze, General, expels the French from the Grisons, vi. 319. Death of, ib. 337.
- Howe, Lord, falls in with, and defeats the French fleet, under Villaret Joyeuse, iv. 186. Transmits petitions from the seamen, to government, for an increase of wages, v. 139.
- Hudson, Edward, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Hughes, a rebel leader, interview of, with Mr. Grattan, v. 444.
- Humbert, General, effects a landing in Killala-bay, with a body of French troops, and is joined by a number of rebels, v. 486. Advances to Castlebar, ib. 488. Defeats Major-general Hutchinson, and proceeds towards Sligo, ib. 489. Receives a check from Colonel Vereker, at Coloony, ib. Overtaken by General Lake, ib. 490. Surrenders at discretion, ib.
- Hungary, insurrection in, i. 275.
- Hunter, Robert, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Huskisson, Mr. appointed one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Hutchinson, Colonel, supports Mr. Knox's motion, for the admission of Catholics into the Irish Parliament, v. 356. Major-general, defeated by the French General Humbert, at Castlebar, ib. 489. General, succeeds Sir Ralph Aber-



Crombie, in the command of the army in Egypt, vi. 631.  
 Obtains possession of Grand Cairo, and Alexandria, ib.  
 632. 634. Lord, supports the Catholic petition, vi. 746.  
 Hyder Ally, hostility of, towards England, i. 8.

## I.

Illuminati, principles of the German, compared with those  
 of the United Irishmen, v. 363.  
 Illuminations, account of the, on the King's recovery, ii.  
 240.  
 Impeachment, debates and animadversions on the mode of  
 prosecution by, ii. 57. 538. Of Mr. Hastings, reso-  
 lution of the new Parliament, to proceed with the, ii. 544.  
 Of Lord Melville, vi. 769.  
 Impey, Sir Elijah, motion for impeaching, rejected, i. 502.  
 Imports and Exports, great increase of, in 1798, vi. 31.  
 Calculations of Mr. Rose, respecting, ib.  
 Income Tax, (see Tax, Income.)  
 India, affairs of, i. 44. 76. 88. War in, ii. 544. Statement  
 of the prosperity of, iii. 400. Affairs of, in 1799, vi. 305.  
 India Bills of Mr. Fox, passed in the Commons, i. 65. Re-  
 jected in the Lords, ib. 67. Of Mr. Pitt brought in, ib.  
 103. Rejected by a majority of eight, ib. 112. Again  
 brought forward, ib. 174.  
 India Company, measures for relieving the, i. 174. Difference  
 between the Court of Directors of the Company, and the  
 Board of Controul, concerning the debts of the Nabob of Arcot,  
 i. 212. Discussions in Parliament on that subject, ib. 213.  
 Motion for taking into consideration their establishments in  
 India, negatived, ib. 238. Refuse to send troops to India,  
 ib. 467. Their increased prosperity of the, iv. 158.  
 Informer, a common, definition of, v. 286.  
 Ingoldstadt, surrender of the fortress of, to the French, in  
 1800, vi. 506.  
 Insurrection, the French, of June, 1792, iii. 250.  
 Invasion, apprehensions of a French, in 1797, v. 99. Hor-  
 rors of an, portrayed by Mr. Pitt, ib. 211. Threat of an,  
 in 1798, ib. 250. Measures proposed for resisting an, ib.  
 251, 252. 257. Message from the King respecting the,  
 ib. 252. Measure for resisting the threatened, in 1803, vi.  
 690. Of Ireland, (see Ireland, invasion of.)  
 Invincibles, capture of the standard of the, by a private sol-  
 dier, in the battle of Alexandria, vi. 631.  
 Ireland, arrangement of a commercial intercourse with, i.  
 211. Retrospective view of the state of, ib. 243. Volun-  
 teers of, become a deliberative body, ib. 245. Reform  
 proposed in the Parliament of, ib. 247. Illegal meetings



holden in, *ib.* 251. A bill passed in the Parliament of, for securing the liberty of the press of, by preventing the publication of libels, *ib.* 252. Commercial treaty with, *ib.* 253. Opposed in the parliament of, *ib.* 265. Rejected by the intemperance of the people, *ib.* 276. The Parliament of, declare the Prince of Wales Regent, *ii.* 213. Conduct of the Patriots of, respecting the regency, *ib.* 222. Vitiating state of, in 1795, ascribed, by Mr. Fox, to the misconduct of Ministers, *iv.* 278. Projected invasion of, in 1796, *v.* 167. Retrospect of the affairs of, *ib.* 295. Proceedings of the White Boys and Defenders in, *ib.* 318. Proceedings of the United Irishmen, in, *ib.* 361, to 365. Commencement of the rebellion in, *ib.* 368, 369. 455. Martial Law proclaimed in, *ib.* 459. Landing of the French in, *ib.* 486. Close of the rebellion in, *ib.* 491. State of, from her first connexion with England, to the rebellion of 1798, *vi.* 126. Union of, with England, projected by Mr. Pitt, *ib.* 134. (See Union, the Irish.) Retrospective view of the affairs of, *ib.* 736. Insurrection in, in 1803, *ib.*

Irish, character of the, by Lord Clare, *v.* 438.

Irishmen, United, address of the, *v.* 208. Account of the, *ib.* 361. Co-operate with the defenders, *ib.* Revolutionary projects of the, *ib.* 362. 365. Adopt the principles of the German Illuminati, *ib.* 363. Connect themselves with the French Directory, *ib.* 380. Send Theobald Wolf Tone to Paris, *ib.* Arm themselves, *ib.* 381. Send Dr. McNevin, and — Lewins, to Paris, to hasten the departure of a French force, and to raise money to facilitate the invasion of Ireland, *ib.* 390. Declare Lord Moira to be a tyrant, *ib.* 441. Maintain a correspondence with France, *vi.* 97. Form societies in England, and administer unlawful oaths, *ib.* 104. Excite mutiny in the navy; form plans for murdering their officers, and for conveying their ships into an enemy's port; and swear to murder all Protestants, *ib.* 105, 106. Form a plan for exciting an insurrection in London, and for securing both Houses of Parliament, the Tower, and the Bank, *ib.* 109. Project a fresh insurrection in Ireland, *ib.* 110.

Irish Union, (see Union, the Irish.)

Irish Volunteers, (see Volunteers, Irish.)

Isnard, violent speech of, in the National Assembly, *iii.* 220.

Proposes a seditious remonstrance to the King, *ib.* 242.

Italy, irruption of the French into, in 1796, *iv.* 569. Account of the campaign of, in 1797, *v.* 173. Military operations in, in 1799, *vi.* 321.



## J.

Jackson, Henry and Hugh, apprehension of, v. 449. Mr. apprehended; tried, and convicted of treason, in Ireland, v. 370. Commits suicide, ib.

Jacobin Club, (see Club, Jacobin.)

Jacobins, the, increased influence of, in France, iii. 200. Headed by Robespierre, ib. 472. 492. Schism amongst them, ib. 472. 492.—iv. 193. Acknowledge that they occasioned the war between England and France, iv. 13. Attacked by the Cordeliers, ib. 194. Rise in defence of Robespierre and his adherents, ib. 211.

Jacobinism, state of, in England, in 1794, iv. 4.

Jaffa, the town of, taken by the French, vi. 274. Murder of 3,800 Turkish prisoners, near, ib. 275.

Janissary, anecdote of the intrepidity and fate of a, at Jaffa, vi. 276.

Jekyll, Mr., opposes the bill for continuing the Habeas Corpus suspension act, iv. 251. Moves for a parliamentary inquiry into the recal of Earl Fitzwilliam from the Viceroyship of Ireland, ib. 326. His motion negatived, ib. 332. Censures Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English government*," as libellous, ib. 469. Supports Mr. Sheridan's motion for burning Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English government*," by the hands of the common hangman, ib. 490. Doubts whether the people of Ireland had not a right to rebel, v. 480.

Jervis, Sir John, accused of avarice and inhumanity, at Martinique, iv. 338. Defeats the Spanish fleet, off Cape St. Vincent, v. 169. Remarkable omission of, in his official letter to the Admiralty, ib.

Joubert, General, succeeds General Moreau, in the command of the French army, in Italy, in 1799, vi. 331. Defeat of, by the allies, at Novi, ib. 333. Death of, ib. 362.

Jourdan, General, compels the Austrians to raise the siege of Maubeuge, iii. 489. Retreat of, in 1796, iv. 555. Defeated by the Archduke Charles, ib. 557. Driven beyond the Rhine, ib. 558. Ordered, by the Directory, to make an incursion into Suabia, vi. 315. Meditates an attack upon the Archduke Charles, ib. 316. Compelled to retreat, ib. 317. Attacks the Austrians, ib. Repulsed, ib. 318. Recalled, ib.

Johnes, Mr. loses a motion, declaring it to be unjust and unnecessary to carry on the war, for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France, vi. 481. Supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, ib. 487.



Johnson, Mr. (the bookseller) prosecuted, and imprisoned, for publishing a libel on government, written by Gilbert Wakefield, v. 287. 289.

Jones, the Rev. W. of Nayland, a constitutional pamphlet of, improperly censured by the Whigs, iii. 297.

Joseph, Emperor of Germany, proposes several reforms in the State, i. 197. Visits Holland, the low countries, and France, ib. 199. Violates the Barrier treaty, ib. 200. Returns to Vienna, ib. 201. Makes extraordinary claims upon Holland, ib. 205.

Joyce, the Rev. Jeremiah, committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116. Discharged, ib. 225.

Joyeuse, the French Admiral, defeat of, by Lord Howe, on the first of June, 1794, iv. 186.

Julien, Count St. exceeds his diplomatic powers, by agreeing to a separate treaty of peace between France and Austria, vi. 506.

Juries, Grand, resolutions of the Irish, respecting the arming of the Papists, v. 329. Ditto, respecting the general conduct of the Papists, ib. 340.

Just, Saint, proposes the arrest of the English in France, in 1793, iv. 14.

Justice, a new court of, instituted in India, i. 184.

## K.

Kavenagh, Father, conduct of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 476.

Kearns, Father, activity of, in the Irish rebellion, v. 468.

Kehl, the fortress of, taken by General Moreau, in 1796, iv. 548. Retaken by the Austrians, ib. 562. 566.

Keim, General, retreat of, in 1796, iv. 550. Repulses the French at Verona, in 1799, vi. 322.

Kenmare, Lord, incurs the resentment of the Irish papists, v. 331.

Kenyon, Lord, opposes the bill for allowing the Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters to act as officers in the supplementary militia, v. 163.

Keogh, Father, apprehension, trial, and execution of, v. 471.

Kersaint, testimony of, to the neutrality of the English, iii. 305.

Killala, the Bishop of, supports the bill for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 356. Charged, by Lord Clare, with ignorance, ib. 357.

Killala Bay, landing of the French in, v. 486.

Kilwarden, Lord, murder of, vi. 736.

King, answer of the, to an opposition address from the House of Commons, i. 84. 140. 145. Message of the, to the House



- of Commons, requesting a provision to be made towards liquidating the debts of the Prince of Wales, *ib.* 410. Illness of the, *ii.* 21. 23. 128. Recovery of the, from illness, *ib.* 206. Message from the, respecting the dispute about Nootka Sound, *ib.* 480. Message of the, to the House of Commons, on the Russian armament, *iii.* 12. Message of the, to Parliament, respecting the murder of the French king, *ib.* 308. Message of the, to Parliament, announcing the French declaration of war, in 1793, *ib.* 350. Message of the, to Parliament, on the landing of the Hessian troops, in 1794, *iv.* 52. On the increase of the army, *ib.* 54. Respecting seditious societies, *ib.* 116. Attacked by a mob, in 1795, *ib.* 394. 396. 398. 403. Consequent proceedings in Parliament, *ib.* 403. 415. Visits the theatre, *ib.* 404. New title assumed by the, at the period of the Union, *vi.* 541. Firmness of the, respecting Catholic emancipation and the coronation oath, *ib.* 549. 552. Refuses to admit Mr. Fox into the cabinet, at the change of Ministry, in 1804, *ib.* 709.
- King, the Rev. Richard, remarks of, on the Test laws, and the alliance between Church and State, *ii.* 454. 464.
- King, Lord, supports the Catholic petition, *vi.* 746.
- Kingdoms and States, the position controverted, that, in their political progress, there is a certain point of elevation, beyond which they cannot advance, *i.* 1.
- Kinnoul, the Earl of, supports the conduct of the British government, respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, *v.* 88.
- Kleber, General, defeat of, by General Kray, in 1796, *iv.* 546, 547. Remonstrance of, against the orders of Buonaparté, to murder 3,800 Turkish prisoners at Jaffa, *vi.* 275. Assumes the command of the French army in Egypt, on the departure of Buonaparte, *ib.* 311. Writes to the Directory, respecting the state of the army, and advising them to make peace with the Porte, *ib.* 312. Agrees to the convention of El Arisch, *ib.* 510. Assassination of, *ib.* 512.
- Klundert, brave resistance of the garrison of, *iii.* 419.
- Knatchbull, Sir Edward, moves the address, at the opening of Parliament, in the winter of 1794. *iv.* 235. The address carried, *ib.* 249.
- Knox, Mr. G. moves for the admission of Catholics in the Irish Parliament, *v.* 355. Loses his motion, by 163 to 69. *ib.* 356.
- Knox, Mr. extract from his Essays, on the political circumstances of Ireland, *v.* 397.
- Koenemann, Mr. the Danish minister, at Paris, applies to the French Directory for a passport for a British envoy, to treat for peace, *v.* 10. Receives a repulsive verbal answer, *ib.* 11.



Korsakow, General, arrives in Switzerland, to reinforce Suworow, in 1799, vi. 336. Defeated by Massena, and compelled to retreat, ib. 337.

Kornack, defeat of General Jourdan at, in 1796, iv. 557.

Kosciusko, General, account of, iv. 344. Taken prisoner by General Suworow, ib. 346.

Kray, General, defeats the French, under General Kleber, in 1796, iv. 546, 547.

Kyd, Stewart, charged with high treason, iv. 224.

# L.

Labour in Ireland, Reflections on the inadequate price of, v. 312.

La Clos, account of, ii. 376.

Lacroix, execution of, iv. 195.

Ladies, young, fourteen, guillotined, for dancing at a ball, given by some Prussian officers, iv. 189.

Lake, General, activity of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 384. Overtakes General Humbert at Ballynaninck, and compels him to surrender at discretion, v. 490.

Lally, Tolendal, eloquent, but inefficient speech of, ii. 380.

Lambesc, the Prince de, conduct of, ii. 357.

Lambton, Mr. opposes the bill for continuing the Habeas Corpus Suspension act, iv. 250.

Lameth, Charles de, proposes the suppression of tithes, in France, ii. 497. Challenged, and wounded, by the Duke de Castries, ib. 509.

Lancaster, the Duchy of, an address voted, requesting the King not to grant the office of, otherwise than during pleasure, i. 88.

Landaff, the Bishop of, opposes the commercial treaty between England and France, i. 363.

Landrecy, defeat of the French near, iv. 181. Siege and capture of, ib. Surrender of, to the French, ib. 184.

Land Tax, plan proposed for the redemption of the, v. 229.—Passed into a law, ib. 235.

Langrishe, Sir Hercules, censures the conduct of the Irish papists, v. 334.

Lansdowne, the Marquis of, defends the general principle of the commercial treaty between England and France, i. 366. Proposes to send an ambassador to France to prevent the murder of the King, iii. 302. Opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, ib. 411. Moves for an Address to the King, beseeching him to avow his disposition to treat for peace with France, iv. 88. Loses his motion, ib. 89. Opposes Mr. Pitt's treasonable conspiracy bill, ib. 151. Charges Ministers with being the authors of the attack on the King, in



- 1795, *ib.* 405. Opposes Lord Minto's motion, for the fine and imprisonment of the printer and proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, for a libel on the House of Lords, v. 278.
- Landsturm, levy of the, in Switzerland, v. 516. 520. Joined by numbers of women, *ib.* 520.
- Lascelles, Mr. proposes and carries a bill of indemnity for Mr. Pitt, for advancing money to Messrs. Boyd and Benfield, vi. 764, 765. Moves for the interment of Mr. Pitt, at the public expence, *ib.* 817.
- Lasource, M. de, a Calvinist minister, defends the massacres at Avignon, iii. 218.
- Lateran, extract from the fourth council of, proving the obligations of Papists to be incompatible with their duty to a Protestant government, vi. 563.
- La Touche, Mr. opposes Mr. Hobart's bill, for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 355.
- Latouche, Treville, account of, ii. 376.
- Latour, General, defeated by Moreau, in 1796, iv. 549. 559.
- Lauderdale, the Earl of, proposes the same amendment to the Marquis of Abercorn's motion, in the House of Lords, that Mr. Grey had proposed in the House of Commons, on the subject of the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, iii. 183. Opposes the Alien bill, *ib.* 304. Extract from a letter to, *ib.* 319. Proposes an amendment to the Address to the Throne, respecting the French declaration of war, similar to that which had been moved by Mr. Fox, in the House of Commons, *ib.* 380. Expresses himself proud to rank Brissot among his friends, *ib.* Opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, *ib.* 411. Moves for an Address to the Throne, respecting the cases of Muir and Palmer, iv. 44. His motion rejected without a division, *ib.* Denies the legality of voluntary contributions, for the defence of the country, *ib.* 58. Censures the House of Peers, for their conduct in ordering the resolution of Earl Stanhope, proclaiming kings to be a curse upon mankind, to be expunged from the journals of the House, *ib.* 104. Opposes Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy bill, *ib.* 151. Makes a motion in favour of peace with France, *ib.* 292. Loses it, by 53 against 8, *ib.*
- Launay, M. de, imprudence of, ii. 362. Murder of, *ib.* 369.
- Law, declaratory, for defining the powers of the Board of Control for Indian Affairs, i. 468 to 479. Navigation, bill for enforcing the, iv. 155. Penal, Mr. Pitt's observations on its origin and nature in England, v. 157. Martial, proclaimed in Ireland, v. 459.
- Law, Sir Edward, appointed Attorney-General, in 1801, vi. 585. Mr. T. expelled from the Committee of the Loyal Association, iii. 290. Emigrates to America, *ib.* 291.



- Lawrence, Dr. expresses his joy at the failure of the negotiation at Lisle, v. 212. Opposes Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487. Censures the conduct of Ministers, respecting the war with Spain, ib. 743. Supports the Catholic petition, ib. 753. Defends Dr. Milner, ib.
- Lazarus, St. severity inflicted on the nuns of, iii. 48.
- Lead, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579.
- League, Asiatic, i. 7.
- Lebas, suicide of, iv. 213.
- Lebon, execution of, iv. 216.
- Le Brun, election of, as third consul, vi. 390.
- Lech, passage of the, in 1796, iv. 559.
- Lee, Citizen, libels of, iv. 427. 438.
- Leeds, the Duke of, supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy bill, iv. 151.
- Lefebvre, General, ordered, by the Directory, to surround the house of Buonaparté with a guard, vi. 366. Goes over to Buonaparté, ib. 307. Preserves Buonaparté from the vengeance of the Members of the Council of Five Hundred, ib. 373.
- Leghorn, entrance of the French into, in 1796, iv. 586.
- Le Gendre, the butcher, insults the King of France, iii. 251.
- Leoben, preliminary articles of peace between France and Austria, signed at, in 1797, v. 180.
- Leonidas, comparison of, with the French Admiral, Brueys, vi. 12.
- Leopold, death of the Emperor, iii. 231.
- Lepaux, La Reveillere, remarks on the conduct of, v. 186.
- Letourneur, M. succeeded in the Directory, by M. Barthélemy, v. 190.
- Letter, from General Dumouriez, to Lord Auckland, iii. 523. A remarkable, from Buonaparté to the King of England, vi. 393. Answer of Lord Grenville, to, ib. 400. A, from Lord Grenville to Mr. Pitt, respecting the change of ministry, in 1804, vi. 710.
- Lettres de cachet, pronounced, by the French Parliament, to be instruments of despotism, unknown to the law, and utterly subversive of the liberty of the subject, ii. 7.
- Lewins, —, sent to the Continent, to raise money for the Irish rebels, v. 390.
- Lewisham, Lord, appointed President of the Board of Controul, in 1801, vi. 584.
- Libel, a, in the Morning Chronicle, on the House of Lords, v. 274. Noticed, and proceeded against by Lord Minto, ib. In the Courier, charging the British government with



- cruelty towards the French prisoners, v. 280. Remarks, proceedings, and debates, respecting, ib. 280 to 291.
- Libels, parliamentary, observations on the nature of, iv. 103.
- Liberty, the tree of, planted in the Roman Capitol, v. 566.
- Liege, addresses from the rebels of, to the National Convention, iii. 225. Bishoprick of, acknowledges the superiority of the French, ib. 414. The French driven out of, ib. 474.
- Limerick, Lord, opposes the Catholic petition, vi. 746.
- Lincoln, the Bishop of, attends Mr. Pitt in his last illness, vi. 804.
- Lisle, account of the negotiations at, in 1797, v. 196 to 209. Agents from the Irish rebels, received at, ib. 208. Debates on the negotiation at, ib. 209.
- Liverpool, the Earl of, appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in 1801, vi. 584.
- Loan, plan of the, for 1794, iv. 49. Debates on the Imperial, ib. 271. 292. Proposed, in 1795, ib. 524. Account of the Loyalty, v. 30. Account of the, for 1798, ib. 245.
- Lodi, account of the battle of, in 1796, iv. 575. Anecdote of Buonaparté at that battle, ib.
- Lombardy, entrance of the French into, in 1796, iv. 581.
- London, the Bishop of, supports Lord Auckland's Bill for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, vi. 498.
- Longford, Lord, supports the Catholic petition, vi. 746.
- Lords, augmentation of the House of, at the period of the Union, vi. 543.
- Losses, comparative estimate of the French and Austrians, in the Italian campaign of 1796, iv. 601.
- Lottery, debate and observations on, iii. 130.
- Loughborough, Lord, contends for the right of the Prince of Wales to the regency, ii. 33. Sarcastic remark of, respecting the avowed friendship between Lord Lauderdale and Brissot, iii. 381. Created Earl of Rosslyn, in 1801, vi. 612.
- Louis XIV. charged by Mr. Fox with endeavouring to overthrow the religious and political establishments of England, iv. 19.
- Louis XVI. yields to the advice of M. Neckar, in allowing a double number of representatives to the Commons, ii. 268. Speech of, at the opening of the States General, 275. Determines to hold a royal session in the Hall of the States General, 298. Misrepresentations of the conduct of, on this occasion exposed, 299. Holds a royal session, 308. Proposes a plan of reform, 310. Holds a conference with the presidents of the two first orders, 338. Refuses to dismiss the



- troops which had been stationed for the protection of the capital, 352. Offers to remove the National assembly, 353. 361. Dismisses M. Neckar, 354. Yields to repeated importunity, removes the troops from the capital, and sanctions the establishment of the militia as national guards of Paris, 373. Goes to Paris, 381. Escapes assassination, 382. Recalls M. Neckar, 387. Forbids his guards to fire on the mob at Versailles, 413. Consents, but afterwards refuses, to quit Versailles, 414. Leaves Versailles for Paris, 421. Is followed thither by the national assembly, 422. Resolves to put himself at the head of the revolution, 502.
- Louis XVI. changes his Confessor, iii. 78. Advised not to receive the sacrament at Easter, 79. Insulted while at chapel, 80. Stopped by the mob on his journey to St. Cloud, 81. Obligated to return, 82. Goes to the National Assembly, but obtains no redress, *ib.* Resolves to attempt his escape from Paris, 83. Purposes to retire to Montmedi, 90. Advised by the Emperor of Germany not to leave Paris, 91. Prepares to set out for Montmedi, 93. Stopped on his arrival at Varennes, and compelled to return to Paris, 95. Accepts the new constitution, 100. Resolves to maintain the constitution, 214. Refuses to sanction two decrees, for declaring all emigrants traitors, and for depriving the non-juring priests of their salaries, 215. Compelled to prepare a declaration of war against Austria, 232. Refuses to sanction the decrees for forming a camp of Jacobins and for banishing the non-juring priests, 249. Dismisses Roland, Claviere, and Servan, *ib.* Expects to be murdered, 252. Rejects Bertrand de Moleville's plan for retiring to Fontainebleau, *ib.* Received with acclamations, by the national assembly, 253. Deposed and confined in the Temple, 256. Tried and executed, 308. Character of, by M. de Malesherbes, 469.
- Louis XVI. the right of, to call upon the British nation for assistance, when his throne was attacked by rebels, proved, by the treaty of Paris, of 1783, vi. 476,
- Louis XVII. premature death of, iv. 364.
- Loveden, Mr. Moves for an examination of the King's Physicians, before a committee of the House of Commons, ii. 129.
- Lovett, John, committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116. Discharged, *ib.* 225.
- Loyal Association, (See Association, Loyal.)
- Loyalists, American, indemnification of the, i. 22, 482. 491. ii. 484.
- Lucerne, change of the constitution of, v. 513. Part of the canton of, refuses the civic oath proposed by General Schauenbourg, *ib.* 533.



- Lucie, St. the capture of, iv. 187.
- Luckner, Mareschal, succeeds Rochambeau in the command of the French revolutionary army, iii. 237.
- Lumsdaine, Major, death of, vi. 348.
- Luneville, signature of the treaty of, in 1801, vi. 507.
- Lutz, Anthony, a private in the Minorca regiment, takes the standard of the Invincibles, at the battle of Alexandria, vi. 631.
- Luxembourg, the Duke de, precipitate conduct of, ii. 341.
- Luxembourg, surrender of, to the French, in 1795, iv. 359.
- Lyons, the standard of royalty raised at, iii. 489. Massacre of the inhabitants of, ib. 490.
- M.
- Macdonald, General, arrival of, in Tuscany, in 1799, vi. 329. Defeat of, by Suworow, ib. 330. Retreats, ib. Joins General Moreau, ib. 331.
- Mack, Colonel, interview of, with General Dumouriez, iii. 477. Insists on the evacuation of the Austrian Netherlands by the French, 479. Treachery of, at Ulm, in 1805, vi. 799.
- Maestricht, the Emperor of Germany renounces his pretensions to, i. 277. Ineffectual efforts of General Miranda to reduce, iii. 419.
- Magazine, London Corresponding Society's, establishment of the, iv. 114.
- Magistrates, Police, abused by Mr. Sheridan, iv. 459. Defended, ib. 460.
- Maitland, Lord, opposes Mr. Pitt's plan of the regency, ii. 165.
- Maitland, Major, motion of, respecting the disasters at Toulon and Dunkirk, iv. 94. Accuses Lord Hood of obtaining possession of Toulon, under false pretenses, of presenting four ships of the line to the enemy, and of making a shameful retreat, ib. 95, 96.
- Malesherbes, M. de, character of Louis XVI. by, ii. 469. Execution of, ib. 471.
- Mallet du Pan, remark of, respecting the desire of the French government for peace, iv. 513. Observations of, respecting the dismissal of Lord Malmesbury from Paris, v. 205. Applied to his Lordship's dismissal from Lisle, ib. Banishment of, from Berne, ib. 521. His characteristic anecdotes of Buonaparté, ib. Remarks of, respecting the subjugation of Switzerland, ib. 537.
- Malta, surrender of, to Buonaparté, v. 580. Surrender of to the English, in 1800, vi. 510. Landing of an English force at, in 1800, ib. 624. Dispute relating to the restoration of, ib. 667.
- Malmesbury, Lord, proceeds to Paris, to treat for peace with the French government, v. 12. Proposes the principle



- of a treaty, *ib.* Objects to the Directory's wish to engage him in a negotiation for a separate peace, and insists on treating for Great Britain and her Allies, *ib.* 13. Delivers a memorial, demanding the restitution of the Netherlands to Austria, and offering to restore all the conquests made by England upon France, *ib.* 14. Resists the demand of the Directory, for the *ultimatum* of the British government, *ib.* 18. Leaves Paris, *ib.* 19. Proceeds to Lisle, in the summer of 1797, and submits to the French Plenipotentiaries the specific terms on which England would agree to make peace, *ib.* 197. Resists the demand of the French Plenipotentiaries, that Britain should surrender the whole of her conquests from France and her Allies, *ib.* 200. 205. Ordered to leave Lisle in 24 hours, *ib.* 205.
- Malouet, proposal of, for prosecuting the libels of Marat, *ii.* 505.
- Malouet, Target, and Sieyes, conference between, respecting the different orders of the States-General, *ii.* 285.
- Mamelukes, defeat of the, by Buonaparté, at Cairo, *v.* 590.
- Manheim, reduction of the town of, *iv.* 359.
- Manifesto, falsehood of the French, against England and Holland, *iii.* 355. A British, vindicating the conduct of government, respecting the rupture of the negotiation with France, in 1796, *v.* 22. A ditto, against France, in 1796, (Appendix A.) *v.* 593. A Turkish, against France, after the battle of the Nile, *vi.* 8. 13. A French, in answer to the Porte, *vi.* 19. Its falsehoods proved, by the intercepted correspondence with the Directory, *ib.* 23.
- Mansfield, the Earl of, supports Mr. Pitt's Treasonable Conspiracy bill, *iv.* 151.
- Mantua, besieged by the French, in 1796, *iv.* 586. Relieved by the Austrians, *ib.* 587. Surrenders, *ib.* 600. Refusal of the French directory to surrender, *v.* 181. Surrender of, to the Allies, in 1799, *vi.* 331.
- Marat, inflammatory publication of, *ii.* 503.
- Maret, M. proves the sincerity of the English government, in wishing to maintain a neutrality, *iii.* 338.
- Marceau, General, death of, *iv.* 558.
- Marengo, account of the battle of, *vi.* 503. Proved to have been gained by General Desaix, *ib.* 504. False statements of the French; respecting the, corrected, *ib.* 505.
- Martial law, (see Law, martial.)
- Margarot, Maurice, seditious conduct of, *iii.* 275. Trial of, for sedition, *iv.* 9.
- Marseilles, the standard of royalty raised at, *iii.* 489. Massacre of the inhabitants of, *ib.* 490.
- Martin, Mr. supports the Traitorous Correspondence bill, *iii.* 409.



- Martinique, capture of, iv. 187. Unjustifiable proclamations issued at, by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, iv. 337.
- Marigalante, capture of, iv. 187.
- Massacres, at Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon, iii. 490, 491.
- Massena, General, ordered, by the directory, to make an incursion into Suabia, in 1799, vi. 315. Obtains some advantages in the Grisons, and in the Tyrol, ib. 316. Defeated by the Austrians, at Feldkirch, ib. 318. Defeated by the Archduke Charles, at Winterthur, ib. 319. Abandons the position of Zurich, ib. 320. Defeats Generals Hotze and Koraskow, ib. 337. Repulsed, in several attacks on the Russians, in their retreat, ib. 338.
- Maubeuge, the siege of, raised by the Austrians, iii. 489.
- Maury, the Abbè, arrest of, ii. 388.
- Maynooth, remarks of Dr. Duigenan, on the Popish establishment at, v. 387. Some of the students of the college of, join the rebels, ib. 388.
- Mayor of London, the Lord, indecisive conduct of, during the riots occasioned by the scarcity of corn, in 1800, vi. 521.
- Meath, the county of, incursion of the rebels into, v. 484.
- Melas, General, resigns the command of the Austrian army, in Italy, in 1799, to Marshal Suworow, vi. 326. Unaccountable inactivity of, ib. 503. Attacks Buonaparté, near Marengo, ib. 504. Defeated, ib. 504. Concludes a convention with the French, restoring all the fortresses taken by Suworow, ib. 405.
- Melville, Lord, appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1804, vi. 720. Exposes the misconduct of Earl St. Vincent's naval administration, ib. 766. Impeachment of, in the House of Commons, ib. 769. Trial and acquittal of, by his Peers, ib. 770. 772. Observations respecting the trial of, ib. 770 to 795.
- Memorial, the, of the French Princes of the blood, to Louis XVI. ii. 256. A, presented by Lord Auckland, to the States-General of Holland, iii. 383. 420. Attack of the, by Mr. Sheridan, ib. 422. Defended by Mr. Pitt, ib. 424. Stigmatised by Mr. Fox, ib. 426.
- Menard, General, sent, by the French directory, to the assistance of the Swiss insurgents, in the Pays de Vaud, v. 505.
- Mengaud, the French commissary, proclamation of, to the people of Switzerland, v. 511.
- Menou, General, broken by the Convention, for not forcing the Parisians to an unconditional compliance with their demands, iv. 377. Assumes the command of the army in Egypt, vi. 512. Professes the Mahometan faith, ib. Fatal blunder of, in Egypt, ib. 627. Surrenders Alexandria to the English, in 1801, ib. 633.



- Mentz, surrender of, to the French troops, iii. 414. To the Prussians, ib. 489. Seizure of, by the French, v. 539.
- Merchants, temporary embarrassments of the English, in 1793, iii. 436. Of Dublin, pass resolutions against the Irish Union, vi. 156.
- Merchant-Taylor's Hall, dinner at, on the anniversary of Mr. Pitt's birth-day, in 1802, vi. 657.
- Message, the King's, announcing the rupture of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation, in 1796, v. 78. Respecting the threat of invasion, in 1798, ib. 252. Address, in answer to the, proposed, unanimously carried, ib. 254. 256. The King's, proposing the Irish Union, vi. 134. Communicating the resolutions of the Irish Parliament, respecting the Union, ib. 253. Relating to foreign subsidies, in 1800, ib. 471.
- Mettingen, account of the battle of, in 1796, iv. 552.
- Meurthe, Boulay de la, memorable speech of, respecting the revolution effected by Buonaparté, after his return from Egypt, vi. 379. Inconsistency of, ib. 381. 387.
- Milan, entrance of the French into, in 1796, iv. 581. Of the Allies, in 1799, vi. 327. Evacuation of, by the Austrians, ib. 503.
- Mildmay, Sir H. moves for a committee of the whole House, to consider an act of the 31st of the King, for the relief of Papists, vi. 483. Introduces a bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, ib. 486. Supported by Messrs. Pitt, Bragge, Newbolt, Johnes, Dudley Ryder, Erskine, Perceval, Sir W. Scott, and the Bishop of Winchester; and opposed by Messrs. Hobhouse, Windham, Sheridan, Dr. Lawrence, and the Bishop of Rochester, ib. 487. 491. 493. Carries the Bill in the Commons, but loses it in the Lords, ib. 490. 493. Supports Lord Belgrave's amendment on Mr. Nicholl's motion respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, ib. 656. Carries a motion for a vote of thanks to Mr. Pitt, by 211 against 52, ib. 657.
- Militia, the English, rendered eligible to serve in Ireland, v. 271. Three fifths of the, enabled, by act of Parliament, to enter into the line, in 1799, vi. 392.
- Militia, supplementary, proposal for raising a, v. 29. Raised, ib. 30.
- Militia, a Scotch, bill passed for embodying, in 1796, v. 30.
- Milner, Sir W. seconds Mr. Coombe's motion for the removal of ministers, in 1797, v. 124.
- Milner, Dr. defence of, by Dr. Lawrence, vi. 753. Claims for the Papists the exclusive performance of miracles, ib.
- Mincio, passage of the, by the French, in 1796, iv. 585. Retreat of the French beyond the, in 1799, vi. 325.



- Ministers, intended resignation of, in 1801, vi. 569. 573. A list of the new, in 1801, ib. 584. General character of the, ib. 585. Resignation of the, in 1804, ib. 708. A list of the new, in 1804, ib. 720.
- Ministers, French, change of, iii. 237. Treachery of the, ib. 247. Extort the King's consent to a decree for disbanding the Guards, ib.
- Ministry, coalition, formation of the, i. 37. Its dissolution, ib. 76. State of the, in 1792. iii. 190.
- Minority, list of the, on Mr. Pitt's address to the King, respecting the rupture of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation, in 1796, v. 87.
- Minto, Lord, calls the attention of the House to a libel in the Morning Chronicle, v. 275. Moves that the printer and proprietor of that paper be fined and imprisoned, ib. 277. His motion carried, ib. 279.
- Mirabeau, sentiments of, respecting the Emperor of Germany's expulsion of the ecclesiastics, i. 202. Invites the clergy to unite with the Commons, in the assembly of the States-General, at Versailles, ii. 282. Factionous speech of, at the royal session, ib. 323. Seditious declamation of, in the National Assembly, ib. 349. Profligate motion of, ib. 372. Reproved by Mounier, the President of the National Assembly, ib. 411. 421. Gained over to the court, iii. 84. Project of, for restoring the regal authority, ib. 86. Confers with Fayette, ib. Death of, ib. 88. Character of, ib. 89.
- Miranda, General, ineffectual efforts of, to reduce the fortress of Maestricht, iii. 419.
- Misprision of treason, the law of, explained, v. 445.
- Mitchell, Admiral, entrusted with the naval operations of the expedition against Holland, in 1799, vi. 341. Enters the Texel, and compels the Dutch fleet to surrender, ib. 342, 343.
- Mitford, Mr. introduces a bill for the relief of Catholic dissenters, ii. 558. Supports the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and contends, that a treasonable conspiracy actually existed in 1794, iv. 234.
- Mitford, Sir John, succeeds Mr. Addington, as Speaker of the House of Commons, vi. 575.
- M'Kenna, Dr. admonition of, to the Irish Papists, v. 333.
- M'Nevin, the Irish rebel, received at Paris, in the character of ambassador, v. 207. Apprehended on charges of high treason, ib. 340. 449. Sent to Paris, to hasten the departure of a force for the invasion of Ireland, ib. 390. Admits that the Irish rebels would not be satisfied with any concessions whatever, ib. 397. Conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, ib. 486.



- Mob**, treasonable proceedings of the, in 1795, iv. 394.
- Modena**, the Duke of, plundered by the French, in 1796, iv. 581. 584.
- Moir**, Lord, deceived respecting the views of the Irish rebels, v. 392. 399. Censures the conduct of government, in the Irish Parliament, ib. 399. Answered by Lord Clare, ib. 400. Loses his motion, by 35 to 10, ib. 439. Declared a tyrant, by the United Irishmen, ib. 442.
- Monastevin**, the town of, attacked by the rebels, v. 459.
- Money**, Bill for prohibiting the remittance of, to France, iv. 51.
- Money**, causes of the scarcity of, in 1797, v. 98.
- Monge**, letter of, addressed to the friends of liberty, representing England and Spain as two tyrannical governments, anxious to influence the judgment about to be pronounced on Louis XVI. iii. 328.
- Mons**, flight of the French troops from, iii. 236.
- Montelesino**, defeat of the Austrians at, in 1796, iv. 572.
- Montenotte**, account of the battle of, in 1796, iv. 571.
- Montesquieu**, stigmatized as an aristocrat, ii. 336.
- Montmorenci**, proposes the suppression of armorial bearings, in France, ii. 497.
- Montmorin**, M. de, the French minister, succeeds M. de Vergennes, i. 448. Duplicity of, ib. 449.
- Montrose**, the Duke of, appointed one of the paymasters-general, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Moore**, Mathew, charged with high treason, iv. 224. Captain, takes three Spanish ships, in 1804, vi. 742.
- Morat**, the chapel, built in commemoration of the victory of, destroyed by the French, v. 537.
- Moreau**, General, takes the fortress of Kehl, in 1796, iv. 548. Crosses the Rhine, and enters Germany, ib. Defeats the Austrians, under General Latour, ib. 549. 559. Defeated by the Austrians, ib. 560. Retreats, ib. 561, 562, 563. 565. Carries the entrenched camp of Pastrengo, vi. 322. Defeated by the Austrians at Verona, ib. 325. Succeeds Gen. Scherer in the command of the army in Italy, ib. 326. Defeated, by Suworow, on the Adda, ib. 327. Falls back upon Turin, ib. Removes to Coni, ib. 328. Superseded in his command, by General Joubert, ib. 331. Enters Suabia, in 1800, and compels the Austrians to retire, ib. 505. Enters Bavaria, takes possession of Munich, and concludes an armistice with the Austrians, ib. 506.
- Morning Chronicle**, (See Chronicle, Morning.)
- Mornington**, Lord, eloquent speech of, in defence of Ministers, at the meeting of Parliament, in 1794, iv. 12. Supports the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing treason and sedition



- and exposes the views of the seditious societies, *ib.* 433. Great political talents of, in India, *vi.* 304. Makes a friendly offer to Tippoo Sultaun, *ib.* 305. Orders the British army to take the field, in 1799, *ib.*
- Moselle, the French army of the, defeat the allies, and force them to repass the Rhine, *iv.* 185.
- Mosse, Captain, death of, at the battle of Copenhagen, *vi.* 620.
- Moulin, General, election of, as a member of the new French Directory, in June, 1799, *vi.* 361. Orders Lefebvre to surround the house of Buonaparte with Directorial guards, *ib.* 367.
- Mounier, President of the National Assembly, reproves Mirabeau, *ii.* 411. 421.
- Mountjoy, Lord, killed by the Irish rebels, *v.* 462.
- Mulgrave, Lord, denies the charges of Major Maitland, respecting the terms on which the possession of Toulon had been obtained, *iv.* 98. Appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in 1804, *vi.* 721.
- Muir, Mr. trial of, for sedition, *iv.* 37, 40. Transported to New South Wales, *ib.* 44. Cruel treatment of, denied by Mr. Dundas, *ib.* 138.
- Munich, seizure of, by the French, in 1800, *vi.* 506.
- Murad Bey, defeat of, by Buonaparté, *v.* 590.
- Murat, General, attends the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, *vi.* 723.
- Murder, the, of Louis XVI. *iii.* 308. Debates respecting, *ib.* 309. Reflections on the crime of, *ib.* 434.
- Murphy, one of the murderers of Barclay, the Protestant Schoolmaster, at Forkhill, execution of, *v.* 327. Father, activity of, in the Irish rebellion, *v.* 467. Taken and executed, *ib.* 483.
- Musgrave, Sir Richard, proofs from the memoirs of, that the Irish Priests possessed unbounded influence over the rebels, *v.* 469.
- Mutineers, naval, at Portsmouth, conduct of the, *v.* 138, 139. Appoint delegates, and petition the House of Commons for an increase of wages, *ib.* 140. 147. Are promised a redress of their grievances, *ib.* 143. Demand the abolition of the distinction between seamen and landmen, &c. *ib.* 144. Obtain the King's pardon, and nearly the whole of their demands, *ib.* 148. At the Nore, conduct of, *ib.* 150. Appoint R. Parker a delegate, *ib.* 151. Seize the cargoes of two ships in the river, *ib.* 152. Become disheartened, and in part return to their duty, *ib.* 152. The ringleaders are tried and executed, and the rest receive a general pardon, *ib.* 153.



- Mutiny in the fleet, at Portsmouth, v. 138 to 148. Debate respecting the, ib. 148 to 150. At the Nore, ib. 150 to 153. Debate respecting the, ib. 153 to 160. A new, excited in the navy, by the United Irishmen, vi. 104, 105, 106.
- Mutiny act, naval, passed, v. 158.
- Mutiny bill, the, passed without opposition, i. 155.
- Mysore, the, entrance of the British army into, in 1799, vi. 305.

## N

- Naas, the town of, attacked by the rebels, v. 459.
- Naples, revolution at, in 1799, vi. 27. The King of, makes peace with France, in 1796, iv. 585. Prepares to resist the French, vi. 9. Enters the Roman territory, and is defeated at Porto Fornio, ib. 26. Concludes an armistice with the French, ib. 27. Retreats to Sicily, ib.
- Narbonne, M. de, declines the prosecution of Brissot, for libelling the King, iii. 239. Dismissed from office, ib. 240.
- Nation, motions respecting the state of the, i. 73. 82. 92. iv. 276.
- National Assembly ; (see Assembly the French, National.)
- National Convention, (see Convention, the French National.)
- National Debt, (see Debt, National.)
- Nauendorf, General, defeats General Bernadotte, in 1796, iv. 555.
- Naval Officers, (see Officers, Naval.)
- Navigation Laws, (see Laws, Navigation.)
- Navy, Mr. Pitt's new plan for manning the, iv. 265. Proposal of Mr. Harrison, for manning the, by a tax on places and pensions, ib. 269. Mutiny in the, at Portsmouth, v. 138 to 148. Debate respecting the, ib. 148 to 150. At the Nore, ib. 150 to 158. Debate respecting the, ib. 158 to 160. A bill passed, for more effectually manning the, in 1798, ib. 258. 267. Reduced state of the, subsequently to the peace of Amiens, vi. 692. 700.
- Neckar, M. recall of, by the King of France, ii. 21. Ignorance of, in the science of government, ib. 253. Character of, ib. 254. 265. Epigram on, ib. 255. Disappoints the expectations of the French nation, by his speech at the opening of the States-General, ib. 279. Suggests the expediency of holding a royal session, ib. 298. Absents himself from the proposed meeting, ib. 320. Courts the applause of the mob, ib. 331. Instances of the embarrassment and servility of, ib. 334, 335. Dismissed from office, ib. 354. Succeeded by the Baron de Breteuil, ib. 359. Recalled, ib. 387. Proposes a loan, but fails of obtaining it, ib. 401, 404. Flies from Paris, ib. 510.



- Negotiation, a, between England and France, in 1796, v. 12 to 19. Ditto, in 1797, ib. 197 to 205. Ditto, in 1801, vi. 635, 636, 637.
- Negroes, African, a bill for regulating the transportation of, i. 490.
- Neilson, a rebel leader, interview of, with Mr. Grattan, v. 444. Apprehension of, ib. 456. Conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Nelson, Commodore, signal bravery of, in the action off Cape St. Vincent, v. 170. Admiral, sails in pursuit of the French expedition to Egypt, v. 581. Sails to Naples, Sicily, and Malta, and arrives at Alexandria before the enemy, ib. 582. Attacks and defeats the French, in the bay of Aboukir, ib. 583, to 587. Compared, by the French Directory, to Xerxes, vi. 12. Receives the thanks of Parliament, for his services at the Nile, and is created a Baron, vi. 30. Lord, sails with the expedition to the Baltic, in 1801, vi. 617. Passes the Sound, ib. Commences the attack on Copenhagen, ib. 618. Sends a flag of truce to the Crown Prince of Denmark, ib. 619. Goes on shore, and obtains the King of Denmark's consent to an armistice, ib. 620. Proceeds with the fleet to Carlsrona, ib. 623. Death of, at the battle of Trafalgar, ib. 801.
- Nepean, Sir E. appointed Chief Secretary in Ireland, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Netherlands, the Austrian, overrun by the French, iii. 415. iv. 183. Discontents in the, iii. 474. Tyranny of the French in the, ib. Partial insurrections in the, in 1798, vi. 25.
- Neutrality, armed, of 1780, i. 5.
- Newbolt, Mr. supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487.
- Newnham, Alderman, gives notice of a motion respecting the pecuniary embarrassments of the Prince of Wales, i. 395, 396. 398. Withdraws his notice, ib. 419.
- Newspaper, an English, asserted to be in the pay of France, v. 275.
- Newspapers, a bill proposed and passed, for regulating the printing and publishing of, v. 281 to 291. Treasonable exportation of, v. 282. Rebel, loyal persons proscribed in the, v. 441.
- Nicholl, Mr. moves that all salaries under 2000*l.* a year be applied to the use of the war, v. 236. Withdraws his motion, ib. 243. Moves a vote of thanks to the King, for removing Mr. Pitt from his councils, vi. 654. Loses his motion, by a large majority, ib. 657.
- Nicholls, Sir John, defends Ministers, respecting the dispute with Spain, vi. 743.



Nile, Nelson's victory of the, v. 583 to 587. Effects of, vi. 4. 8. 11.

Nimeguen, the fortress of, evacuated by the Duke of York, iv. 185.

Nobles, the French, join the Commons, ii. 342.

Nootka Sound, dispute respecting, ii. 477 to 489.

Nore, mutiny at the, in 1797, v. 150 to 153. Debate respecting the, ib. 153 to 160.

Norfolk, the Duke of, opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, iii. 411. Moves for an inquiry respecting the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam from the Viceroyship of Ireland, iv. 316. Loses his motion, ib. 332. Supports the bill for allowing Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters to act as officers in the Supplementary Militia; and accuses the Church of England of displaying a spirit of persecution, v. 162. Opposes Lord Minto's motion, for the fine and imprisonment of the printer and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, for a libel on the House of Lords, ib. 278.

North, Lord, coalesces with Mr. Fox, i. 24. Opposes the motion for a repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, ib. 382. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's resolutions, respecting the regency, and reprobates the alleged right of Parliament to appoint a Regent, ii. 74, 75. Reflections on the speech of, ib. 76. His amendment negatived, ib. 98. Censures Mr. Pitt for not introducing the names of the Princes of the Blood, in the list of the Queen's Council, and moves for their insertion, ib. 197. His motion negatived, ib. 202. Supports the Address of the Master of the Rolls, relating to the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, iii. 181.

North, Mr. F. supports the Traitorous Correspondence bill, iii. 409.

Northern Confederacy, (see Confederacy, Northern.)

Northern Powers, favourable disposition of the, in 1798, vi. 10.

Norwich, political societies at, letter to the, from the Constitutional Society, iv. 124.

Notables, convention of an assembly of, i. 441. Dissolved, ib. 442. Reassembled, ii. 21, 253.

Novi, defeat of the French at, in 1799, vi. 333.

Nugent, General, defeats the rebels in the county of Down, v. 465.

## O.

Oath, the, taken by the members of the French National Convention, ii. 291. The Tennis Court, refused to be taken by M. Martin D'Auch, ib. 303. Administration of



- new constitutional, on the establishment of a consular government in France, vi. 385.
- Oath of allegiance, modification of the, for the Roman Catholics, ii. 562.
- Oath, coronation, remarks on the nature of the, vi. 550. Firmness of the King, respecting the, ib. 551.
- Oaths, reflections on the multiplication of, occasioned by the revenue laws, vi. 37. Reflections on the constant violation of, by the French, vi. 385.
- O'Coigley, —, sent to the Continent, by the Irish rebels, to obtain the assistance of a French force, v. 443. Apprehended on the road, and afterwards executed, ib.
- O'Connor, Arthur, panegyrised by Mr. Tierney, v. 257. Communicates with the French General, Hoche, respecting a descent on Ireland, ib. 383. Sent to the Continent, by the Irish Rebels, to obtain the assistance of a French force, ib. 443. Apprehended on the road, ib. Conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, ib. 486.
- O'Connor, Roger, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Oczakow, the fortress, an impediment to the conclusion of peace between Russia and Turkey, iii. 16. Ceded to Russia, ib. 29.
- Office, fees of, motion for, and debate respecting, an inquiry into, v. 129 to 138.
- Officers, Naval, discussion respecting a promotion of, in 1788, i. 466.
- Ogle, Mr. opposes the introduction of Mr. Hobart's bill, for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 354.
- O'Hara, Mr. presents a petition, from the Catholic committee, to the Irish Parliament, v. 336.
- O'Neil, Lord, killed by the Irish rebels, v. 465.
- Onslow, Vice-Admiral, assists in the defeat of the Dutch fleet, off the Texel, v. 172.
- Opposition, approach of a schism in the, iii. 5. Ridiculous argument of the, in favour of the existence of a solid government in France, iv. 35. Accused, by their former leaders, of favouring the views of the enemy, ib. 571. View of the parliamentary conduct of the, in 1794, ib. 17. Secession of the, from their parliamentary duties, ib. 215. Observations on the assigned reasons for that measure, ib.
- Orange, the Princess of, seized by the Dutch insurgents, i. 432.
- Orde, Mr. attacks the Bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet, respecting the insurrection in Munster, v. 315.



Orleans, the Duke of, banished to one of his country seats, ii. 7. Refuses to sign the memorial of the French Princes of the blood to Louis XVI. *ib.* 261. Character and conduct of the, *ib.* Employs the Abbé Sieyès to draw up the instructions for his bailiwicks, *ib.* 263. Addresses the Parisian mob, *ib.* 273. His cowardice, *ib.* 377. 509. Directs the mob to the Queen's apartment, at Versailles, *ib.* 419. Challenges the President, Frondeville, *ib.* 509. His trial and execution, iii. 502.

Orleans Committee, account of the, ii. 376.

Orleans faction, conspiracy of the, ii. 405. 410. 419.

Ormond, Lord, supports the Catholic petition, vi. 746.

Orr, William, and Samuel, execution of, for treason, v. 432.

Ostend, expedition against, in 1798, v. 590.

Otto, M. endeavours to procure a naval armistice between England and France, in 1800, vi. 506. Enters into a negotiation for peace with Lord Hawkesbury, in 1801, *ib.* 635. Signs the preliminaries, *ib.* 636.

Oude, confiscation of the treasures of the Princesses of, i. 512.

Oudelot, M. infamous conduct of, ii. 333.

#### P.

Palace, Corsini, tumult at the, excited by Joseph Buonaparte, v. 554.

Palais Royal, factious proceedings in the, ii. 269.

Paley, Dr. examination of the notions of, respecting Parliamentary Reform, i. 226.

Palmer, trial of the Rev. Fysche, iv. 37. 40. Petition of, to Parliament, *ib.* 39. Transported to New South Wales, *ib.* 44. Cruel treatment of, denied by Mr. Dundas, *ib.* 138.

Paper, a new duty on, iv. 50.—vi. 579. 584.

Papist, a, review of the law, relating to the marriage of a King or Queen of England with, i. 404.

Papists, the, relief of, from certain penalties and disabilities, ii. 558. 561. A bill for the relief of indignantly rejected by the Irish Parliament, during the administration of Lord Halifax, v. 297. Ferocious conduct of, in Armagh, *ib.* 321. Murder an innocent family, at Forkhill. *ib.* 323. Collect arms, *ib.* 329. Condemn the petition of the Catholic Committee as too mild and moderate, *ib.* 331. Erase the name of Lord Kenmare from the Committee, *ib.* Hold parochial meetings, *ib.* 332, 337. Their limited claims of the, in 1792, *ib.* 335. Their Petition rejected by the Irish Par-



- liament. *ib.* 336. Allowed to practise as attornies, and as barristers, and to intermarry with Protestants, *ib.* 337, 338. Endeavour to form a National Convention, *ib.* 338. Send delegates to the King, *ib.* 339. Obtain farther concessions, *ib.* 349. Proved to have interested themselves in favour of the defenders, *ib.* 353. Obtain the elective franchise, &c. by the sanction of Parliament, *ib.* 356. Continue to be disaffected, *ib.* 360. Unite with the Presbyterians, and commit the most dreadful outrages, *ib.* 368. Their motives for so doing, *ib.* Encouraged by Mr. Grattan, to demand their emancipation, *ib.* 375. Their claims rejected by Parliament, *ib.* 380. Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing their increase, in England, proposed, and passed, in the Commons, but rejected in the Lords, *vi.* 486. 490. 493.— (see Veil.) Remarks on the proposed indulgences to them, at the time of the Union, *ib.* 544 to 568. Reflections on the imputed change in the principles of the modern, *ib.* 560. Their obligations proved to be incompatible with their duty to a Protestant government, *ib.* 563. Their Committee in Dublin, in 1803, *ib.* 738. Their Petition opposed by the Corporation of Dublin, *ib.* Presented to Parliament, *ib.* 745. Rejected in the Lords, by 129 against 49, and, in the Commons, by 336 against 124, *ib.* 750. 763.
- Paris, riots at, in 1789, *ii.* 251. 270, 271, 272. The Parliament of, publish a resolution on the state of the nation, *ib.* 264. The Archbishop of, attacked by a mob, *ib.* 333. Fresh disturbances at, *ib.* 347, 455, 408. Massacres at, in 1792, *iii.* 257. Insurrections in, in 1795, *iv.* 361. 376. 378. The treaty of, in 1763, proved to have given Louis XVI. a right to call upon the British nation for assistance, when his throne was attacked by rebels, *vi.* 476.
- Parker, Admiral Sir Hyde, commands the expedition to the Baltic, in 1801, *vi.* 617.
- Parker, Richard, appointed a delegate by the mutineers at the Nore, in 1797, *v.* 151. Taken, tried, condemned, and executed, *ib.* 153.
- Parliament, Mr. Pitt's proposed reform in, rejected, in 1782, *i.* 40. Adjournment of, *ib.* 89. Resumed meeting of, *ib.* 90. Resolutions carried for preventing a dissolution of, *ib.* 99. Prorogation of, *ib.* 156. Dissolution of, *ib.* 157. Meeting of a new, in May, 1784, *ib.* 164. Prorogation of, in August, 1784, *ib.* 194. Meeting of, in February, 1785, *ib.* 210. Meeting of, in January, 1786, *ib.* 282. Prorogation of, *ib.* 322. Meeting of, in January, 1787, *ib.* 327. Meeting of,



in November, 1787, ib. 451. Prorogation of, ib. 505. Meeting of, in November, 1788, ii. 22. Adjournment of, for a fortnight, in consequence of the King's illness, ib. 23. Opened by commission, in March 1789, ib. 235. Prorogation of, ib. 251. Meeting of, in January, 1790, ib. 430. Dissolution of, ib. 485. Opening of the new, in November, 1790, ib. 511. Opening of the, in 1792, iii. 114. Prorogation of, ib. 189. Meeting of, in December, 1792, ib. 272. Prorogation of, ib. 465. Meeting of, in January, 1794, iv. 9. Prorogation of, in July, 1794, ib. 171. Meeting of, in December, 1794, ib. 231. Prorogation of, in June, 1795, ib. 341. Meeting of, in October, 1795, ib. 394. Prorogation, and dissolution, of, in May, 1796, ib. 543. Meeting of a new, in October, 1796, v. 22. A Reform of, proposed by Mr. Grey, ib. 160. Prorogation of, in July, 1797, ib. 164. Meeting of, in November, 1797, ib. 209. Prorogation of, in June, 1798, ib. 291. Meeting of, in November, 1798, vi. 29. Meeting of, in September, 1799, ib. 392. Prorogation of, ib. 393. Meeting of, in January, 1800, ib. 409. Prorogation of, in July, 1800, ib. 498. Meeting of, in November, 1800, ib. 525. Meeting of the first *Imperial*, in 1801, ib. 544. 569.

Parliament, Back-Lane, account of the, in Ireland, v. 339.

Parliament, the French, refuse to register the Stamp-duty, i. 443. Banishment of the, ib. 443. Recall of the, ib. 444.

Publish a resolution on the state of the nation, ii. 264.

Parliament, the Irish, precipitate conduct of, respecting the Regency, ii. 212. Proceedings of the, v. 300. 305. 312. 350. 355. 385. 399. Pass a bill to prevent tumultuous assemblies, ib. 312. 317. Reject the petition of the Catholics, ib. 336. Concede several important points to the Catholics, ib. 337. 350. 359. Pass a bill for granting them the elective franchise, &c. ib. 350. 355, 356. Opening of the, in January, 1799, vi. 157. Prorogation of the, in June, 1799, ib. 233. Opening of the, in January, 1800, ib. 234.

Parliaments, remarks on the power and jurisdiction of the French, ii. 4.

Parliamentary Reform, (see Reform, Parliamentary.)

Parma, the Duchy of, united to France, vi. 660.

Parnell, Sir John, moves for the dissolution of the Irish Parliament, prior to the Union, vi. 252. Loses his motion by 150 against 104, ib. 252.

Parsons, Sir Lawrence, proposes a plan, in the Irish Parliament, for conciliating the rebels, v. 442. Loses his motion by 156 to 19, ib. 443. Opposes the Irish Union, vi.



158. Moves an amendment to the Viceroy's address, at the opening of the Irish Parliament, in January, 1800, deprecating the Union, *ib.* 234. Loses his motion, by 138 against 96, *ib.* 235.
- Parsons, Mr. defends the Established Church, in Ireland, against the attacks of Mr. Grattan, v. 308.
- Parties, French, state of the, after the death of Robespierre, iv. 215.
- Pastrengo, the entrenched camp of, taken by General Moreau, in 1799, vi. 322.
- Patten, Colonel, moves a vote of censure against Ministers respecting the renewal of the war, vi. 685.
- Paul, the Emperor, assassination of, vi. 621. Succeeded by his son Alexander, *ib.* 622.
- Paul's, St. royal procession to, on the King's recovery, ii. 239.
- Paupers, account of the number in each county and hundred, in the year 1805, iii. 517.
- Pavia, atrocities of the French at, in 1796, iv. 582. The pretended treaty of, considered, by Mr. Pitt, as a clumsy forgery, vi. 424. Evacuation of, by the Austrians, vi. 503.
- Pays de Vaud, insurrection in the, v. 505.
- Peace, a, concluded with France and Spain, i. 22.
- Peace, the, of 1783, debates respecting, i. 22. 26, 27.
- Peace, petitions for, presented to Parliament, iv. 273. The King's message in favour of, in 1795, *ib.* 495. Proposal for, by the British government, in 1796, *ib.* 518. 523. A new proposal for, with France, in 1796, v. 10, 11.
- Peace, rupture of the negotiation for, in 1796, v. 19. 78. Negotiation for, opened at Lisle, in 1797, *ib.* 197. Closed, *ib.* 205. Debates on the, *ib.* 209.
- Peace, negotiations for, between England and France, in 1801, vi. 635.
- Peace, conclusion of a treaty of, between France and Turkey, in 1801, vi. 635.
- Peace, the preliminaries of, signed, by Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto, vi. 636. Concluded at Amiens, in 1802, *ib.* 637.
- Peers, protest of sixteen Irish, against the address of the Irish Parliament, investing the Prince of Wales with the regency, ii. 217.
- Peel, Sir Robert, supports Lord Belgrave's amendment on Mr. Nicholl's motion respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, vi. 656.
- Pelham, Lord, appointed one of the secretaries of State, in 1801, vi. 584.



- Pelham, Mr. opens the fourth charge against Mr. Hastings, i. 416. Judicious conduct of, while secretary to Lord Camden, in Ireland, v. 379.
- Peltier, M. editor of *L'Ambigu*, prosecution of, by Buonaparté, for a libel, vi. 663.
- Pensions and Places, a motion for abolishing, iv. 73. Observations and debates respecting the, ib. 73 to 78. Economy of Mr. Pitt respecting, ib. 76. Motion lost, ib. 78. Absurdity of Mr. Harrison's plan for taxing, exposed, ib. 269.
- People, Friends of the, (see Friends of the People.)
- Perceval, Mr. supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487. Appointed Solicitor-general, in 1801, ib. 585. Ditto, in 1804, ib. 721. Opposes the Catholic petition, ib. 752.
- Pethion, moves for the trial of Louis XVI. iii. 99.
- Petion, Mayor of Paris, pensioned by the National Assembly, iii. 242. Presents a petition to the National Assembly, demanding the deposition of Louis XVI. ib. 255.
- Petitions, the Catholic, rejected by the Irish Parliament, in 1792, v. 336.
- Petitions for Peace, presented to Parliament, iv. 273.
- Petty, Sir William, financial estimate of, vi. 39. Observations of, respecting the relative numbers of Protestants and Catholics, in Ireland, ib. 241.
- Philanthropy, British, curious specimen of, respecting the Irish Union, vi. 230.
- Philippeaux, Colonel, death of, vi. 287.
- Philippeaux, execution of, iv. 195.
- Philipsburgh, surrender of the fortress of, to the French, in 1800, vi. 506.
- Philippe, a Jacobin parricide, horrible anecdote of, iii. 259.
- Philosophists, reflections on the evil tendency of the writings of the French, vi. 91.
- Phipps, Colonel, contrasts the conduct of the British troops, in 1780, with that of the French, at the commencement of the revolution, ii. 432.
- Physician, a French, noble conduct of, in resisting the intention of Buonaparté to poison his sick soldiers, at Jaffa, vi. 278. Accuses Buonaparté of high treason, before the Institute, at Cairo, ib. 279. Elected president of the Institute, at Cairo, ib. 281.
- Physicians, examination of the King's, respecting his illness, ii. 23, 24.
- Pichegru, General, takes the command of the French army, iv. 180. Adopts the plan of General Lloyd, ib. 180. 182.



Pikes, manufacture of, in Ireland, v. 450.  
 Pilnitz, object of the conference at, iii. 101. Objectionable passage in the declaration of, ib. 103.  
 Pitt, Mr. birth of, (vol. i.) 9. Educated by Dr. Wilson, ib. Enters at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, under Dr. Prettyman, 10. Quits the University, goes to the Continent, returns, and is called to the bar, 11. Returned M. P. for the borough of Appleby, 12. Makes his first speech, on Mr. Burke's motion for a reform in the Civil List, ib. Refuses an offer to be included in the Rockingham administration, 13. Made Chancellor of the Exchequer, 14. Defends the King's speech, in an animated reply to Mr. Burke, 17. Defends the peace of 1783, 23. 28. Censures the coalition between Lord North and Mr. Fox, 24. 27. 33. In a minority respecting the peace, 26. 32. Justifies Lord Shelburne, 28. Defends the prerogative of the Crown, on Lord Surrey's motion for the interposition of Parliament, in the formation of a new ministry, 35. Reduced to the situation of a private member, on the formation of the coalition ministry, 37. Proposes, for the second time, a reform in Parliament, 38. His resolutions rejected, 40. Brings in a bill, to effect a reform in the government offices, 42. Opposes Mr. Fox's India bills, 60. Opposes Mr. Baker's motion, respecting the privileges of Parliament, after the rejection of Mr. Fox's India bills, 72. Becomes Prime Minister on the dissolution of the coalition ministry, 77. Accuses Mr. Fox of artifice and management, 91. Justifies his opposition to Mr. Fox's India bills, 97. Brings in his own India bill, 103. Proposes an India Board, 108. Defends the principle of an appeal from the King's Privy Council to the King in Council, 109. Calls General Conway to order, for charging Ministers with bribery, 114. Asserts his Majesty's intention of not dissolving the Parliament, 115. Defends the royal prerogative against the controul of the House of Commons, 121. States, that his Majesty had not dismissed his ministers, and that his ministers had not resigned, 126. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for a change of ministers, 144. Reflections on his conduct, 158. Brings in a bill to prevent smuggling, 171. Proposes the Commutation Act, ib. Brings in a bill for the regulation of duties on British spirits, 174. Again introduces his India Bill, 174, 175. Defines the nature of Chartered rights, 176. Recapitulates the supplies which had been granted by Parliament, and states the ways and means for raising them, 188. Adopts a new mode of disposing the loan, 189. Renews his proposals for Parliamentary Reform, 215. Delineation of his character as a reformer, 225. Comparison of his abilities with those of Mr. Fox, ib. Supposed to have



adopted the sentiments of Dr. Paley, on Parliamentary Reform, 230. Reviews the financial state of the country, 238. Brings in a bill for examining the fees, &c. taken in public offices, 240. Brings forward the plan of a Commercial Treaty with Ireland, 253. States the forwardness of a treaty with the Empress of Russia, and defends the conduct of Ministers, respecting the treaty of Berlin, 285. Maintains the necessity of keeping the British government, as much as possible, independent of Hanoverian politics, 286. Supports the Duke of Richmond's plan for fortifying the dock-yards, 289. Proposes a plan for reducing the national debt, 295. Brings in a bill for subjecting the duties on foreign wines to the excise, 305. Justifies Mr. Hastings for his original proceedings against Cheit Sing, but censures him for his subsequent conduct in levying an exorbitant fine on that Rajah, 314. Offends both parties by this mode of treating the subject, 319. Censures Mr. Fox for his opposition to the Commercial Treaty, between England and France, 332. Enters into a full view of the nature, contents, and probable consequences of that treaty, 337. Developes a plan for simplifying the collection of the revenue, by consolidating the duties of custom and excise, 368. Opposes the motion for a repeal of the test and corporation acts, 387. Opens the budget for 1787, 390. Has an interview with the Prince of Wales, on the subject of his Royal Highness's pecuniary embarrassments, 409. Supports the charge against Mr. Hastings, relative to the confiscation of the treasures of the Princesses of Oude, 413. Censured by party writers, for his conduct respecting the charges against Mr. Hastings, 424. Defended, 425. Supports the authority of the Stadtholder, 447. Augments the naval and military force of Britain, *ib.* Coincides with Mr. Fox, on the subject of continental alliances, 457. Defends the proposed increase of the means of colonial defence, 463. Resists an attempt to induce the House of Commons to take cognisance of an objectionable promotion of naval officers, in 1788, as interfering with the royal prerogative, 466. Defends the authority assumed by the Board of Controul, respecting the right of sending troops to India, 469. 475. Contends for the propriety of incorporating the King's troops in India with the company's army, 477. Opens the budget for 1788, 480. Proposes a plan for the indemnification of the American loyalists, 482. 491. Moves a resolution for taking the slave trade into consideration, 489. Opposes the motion for Mr. Francis to be a member of the committee for conducting the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, 497. Proposes a treaty of defensive alliance with Holland, 502; and with Prussia, 504.



Pitt, Mr. announces the King's illness to Parliament (vol. ii.) 22. Proposes the appointment of a committee of the House of Commons, to examine the King's physician, 24. Resists the Prince of Wales's right to the regency, insisting on the necessity of a formal decision on the subject, by parliament, 25. 29. Delivers an important speech on the question of right, and on the plan of the regency, 46. Asserts the right of Parliament to appoint a regent, and to define his powers, 55. Controverts the principles advanced by Lord Loughborough, 59. 61. 70. Proposes three resolutions in conformity to the substance of his speech, 73. Replies to Mr. Fox, 92. His resolutions carried, 98. 112. Discussed in the House of Lords, *ib.* Communicates his plan of the regency to the Prince of Wales, 114. Opens the business, on taking into consideration the report of a committee of the House of Commons, on the subject of the King's illness, develops his plan of restrictions on the regent, and examines the ground of the opposite opinions entertained by his Majesty's physicians, 130. Four of his resolutions carried, 159. Defends the fifth, *ib.* His fifth resolution carried, 172. Moves for the appointment of a committee to wait upon the Prince of Wales, with the plan of the regency, 175. Resists the motion of Lord North, for inserting the names of the Princes of the blood, in the Queen's council, 198. Defends the means which he had proposed for making known the recovery of the King, and the resumption of the royal power, 202. Reflections on his conduct during the discussions on the regency, 206. Opens the budget for 1789, 241. Proposes to subject tobacco to the excise, 247. Supports the army estimates of 1790, 433. Thanks Mr. Burke, for his support of the British constitution, 446. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion, for the repeal of the test and corporation acts, 449. Opposes Mr. Flood's plan for Parliamentary reform, 469. Opposes Mr. Sheridan's motion for the repeal of the tobacco act, 471. Opens the budget for 1790, 473. Delivers a message from his Majesty, relative to the dispute with Spain, respecting Nootka Sound, 480. Proposes farther indemnifications for the American loyalists, 484. Supports the convention with Spain, and proposes means for defraying the expences of the Spanish armament, 512. 514. Supports the opinion of Mr. Burke, that an impeachment by the House of Commons, is not abated by a dissolution of Parliament, 518. Defends the war with India, 544. Supports Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the Slave Trade, 545. Brings in a bill for regulating the government of Canada, 562. Answers Mr. Fox, in his opposition



to that bill, and deprecates the introduction of republican principles into the British constitution, 570.

Pitt, Mr. proposes a mediation of Great Britain and Prussia, between Russia and Turkey, (vol. iii.) 14. Resolves to counteract the views of the Empress Catherine respecting Poland and Turkey, 16. Moves an address to the throne, on the subject of the Russian armament, 17. Claims the confidence of the country during a negotiation, 23. Thanks Mr. Burke for his defence of the constitution, 50. Opens the budget for 1791, 56. Not yet aware of the dangers resulting from the dissemination of revolutionary principles, 106. Justifies the conduct of ministers, respecting their interference between Russia and the Porte, 117. Opens the Budget for 1792, 119. Proposes the repeal of the taxes on Female Servants, Carts, Waggons, small Houses, and Candles, 120. Philosophically investigates the causes of national prosperity, 121. Proposes a lottery, 130. Speaks in favour of the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade, 131. Speaks on the subject of parliamentary reform, and deprecates its discussion, 136. Expresses a resolution to oppose all wild attempts at innovation, 145. Communicates a copy of an intended proclamation, for preventing seditious meetings and writings, to the leading members of opposition, 156. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion, for the relief of the Unitarians, 166. Treats Mr. Grey's invective with contempt, and supports the address of the master of the rolls, respecting the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, 180. Requests permission to retire from office, unless the seals should be taken from Lord Thurlow, 190. Endeavours to effect a junction of parties, *ib.* Disappointed, through the arrogant pretensions of Mr. Fox, 191. Entertains doubts of the policy and expediency of Reeves's loyal association, 288. Changes his opinion, 289. Appointed warden of the Cinque-ports, 295. Introduces the Alien bill, 303. Delivers an animated speech in the debate upon the King's message, respecting the murder of Louis XVI. 309. Moves an address of thanks to his Majesty, for his royal message subsequently to the murder of the French King, 331. Earnestly endeavours to avoid a war, 336. 342. Advances proofs of the aggressive and dangerous conduct of the French government, 351. Demonstrates the falsehoods contained in the French declaration of war, 355. Moves an address to the King, promising support, 372. Defends the proposed erection of barracks, 398. Opens the budget for 1793, 403. Details the motives of the war, 405. Defends the memorial presented by Lord Auckland and the Austrian Minister to the



States-General of Holland, respecting the French regicides, 426. Proposes and adopts effective measures for the relief of the commercial interest, in 1793. 437. Opposes Mr. Grey's motion, respecting a reform in Parliament, 440. Notices the effects which had been produced by the conduct of the French reformers, 441. Shews, that all the recent petitions which had been presented, for a reform in Parliament, and on which Mr. Grey had founded his motion, must have been fabricated by the same parties, 447. Contends against the right of universal suffrage, 453. Accuses Mr. Grey's plan of being founded on French principles, 455. States the difference between the plan of reform which he had himself formerly proposed, and that of Mr. Grey, 457. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for a peace with France, 462. Pronounced, by a solemn resolution of the French convention, to be an enemy of the human race, 499.

Pitt, Mr. justifies the interference of England in the internal affairs of France, (vol. iv.) 21. Quotes Vattel, in support of that opinion, 22. Contends for the necessity of destroying the Jacobin system, 26. Proves the impracticability of making peace with the revolutionary government, 28. 32. Objects against the proposed interposition of Parliament, respecting the sentence of the Scotch judges upon Muir and Palmer, for sedition, 39. Opposes Mr. Adam's opinions respecting sedition, 42. Defends the subsidiary treaty with the King of Sardinia, 47, 48. Defends the increase of the army, 48. Opens the budget for 1794, *ib.* Proposes the formation of volunteer companies, 54. Contends for the legality and expediency of voluntary contributions, for the defence of the country, 59. Charges the opposition with invading the rights of the subject, 66. Opposes Mr. Harrison's plan for the abolition of places and pensions, 78. Introduces a bill for embodying the French emigrants, 79. Opposes Mr. Whitbread's motion, in opposition to the treaties between England and her allies, 90. Explains the transactions at Toulon, and opposes Gen. Fitzpatrick's motion for the liberation of M. La Fayette, 94. Defends Lord Hood against the charges of Major Maitland, respecting the capture and evacuation of Toulon, 99. Proposes a Committee of Secrecy, to examine the books and papers of the seditious societies, seized by the order of Government, 117. Brings up the first report of that committee, *ib.* Develops the origin and history of the London seditious societies, and traces their connection with France, and with the British convention at Edinburgh, 118. 120. 126. Moves for leave to bring in a bill, to enable his Majesty to arrest and detain persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, for a limited time, 133.



Vindicated from Mr. Grey's charge of duplicity and apostacy, 137. Replies to Mr. Fox's angry speech, in the debate on the Treasonable Conspiracy bill, 142. Vindicates the Committee of Secrecy against the aspersions of Mr. Sheridan, 161. Is called to order, *ib.* Answers Mr. Fox, and resists the proposals for entering into a negotiation with France, 162, 163. Exposes the fallacy of Mr. Sheridan's statements, respecting the confederate powers, 167. Ridicules the notion of his own unpopularity in America, and expresses a hope that he may always be as unpopular with Jacobins, as Mr. Sheridan is popular with them, 168. Explains the grounds between the Whig leaders and the Ministry, 170. His conduct contrasted with that of Mr. Fox, 175. Accused, by Barrere, of contriving a plot for the assassination of Robespierre, 200. Gives evidence on the trial of Horne Tooke, 225. Supports the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, and contends that a treasonable conspiracy actually existed previously to, and at, the time of the state trials, 234. Contends that, though we might be obliged to treat with the French republic, no security could be expected, but from a monarchical government, 239. Exposes the weakness and pusillanimity of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends, and shews that the death of Robespierre had produced no change in the conduct of the French Government to foreign states, 241. 242. Contrasts the financial resources of England and France, 243. Supports a proposed augmentation of the army in 1795, 257. Moves an amendment to Mr. Grey's motion for opening a negotiation with France, and declares, that no form of government in that country shall operate as an impediment to peace, 258. Carries his amendment, by 254 against 90, 268. Introduces a new plan for manning the navy, *ib.* Justifies the measure of a loan to Austria, 272. Opens the budget for 1795, 274. Defends the conduct of ministers respecting Ireland, 279. Moves an adjournment on Mr. Fox's motion for an inquiry into the state of the nation, 281. Carries the adjournment, by 219 against 63, 282. Opposes Mr. Wilberforce's motion for peace, 288. Proposes a provision for the Prince of Wales, on his marriage, 293. 297, 298. Opposes the motion for an inquiry into the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam from the Viceroyship of Ireland, as unnecessary, 328. Pays too little attention to the influence of the press, 391. Resists Mr. Fox's proposals, at the meeting of Parliament, in 1795, for opening a negotiation for peace, 410. Introduces a bill for preventing seditious meetings, 416, 417. Speaks in support of it, 443. 452. Supports Mr. Sheridan's motion against Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English Government*," as a libellous production, 476. 482.



Proposes a renewal of the act for allowing the free importation of corn 493. Opens the budget for 1796, 494. Proposes a loan, *ib.* Delivers a message from the King, in favour of a negotiation for peace, 495. Moves an address of thanks, for the message, 497. Address carried, 499. Adopts means for ascertaining the real views of the French government, respecting peace, 516. Resists Mr. Grey's motion for compelling ministers to commence a negotiation, *ib.* Proposes a new loan, and new taxes, 524. Opposes Mr. Grey's motion for the impeachment of ministers, 526. Opposes the resolutions of Mr. Fox, for the condemnation of ministers, 535. Declares his wish for peace, *ib.* Explains the difference between himself and Mr. Burke, respecting the object of the war, 536. Confutes Mr. Fox's charge of insincerity, in the attempt to open a negotiation for peace, *ib.*

Pitt, Mr. makes a new proposal for peace, through the Danish minister at Paris, (vol.v.) 10. Receives a repulsive answer, 11. Expresses satisfaction, on the opening of the new Parliament, in 1796, at Mr. Fox's promise of support, should the French refuse to listen to equitable proposals for peace, 26. Proposes to raise a supplementary militia, 29. Opens the budget, and proposes the loyalty loan, for 1797, 30. Informs the House of certain sums transmitted to the Emperor of Germany, since the dissolution of the preceding Parliament, and proposes a vote of 3,000,000*l.* for the use of that sovereign, 31, 32. Defends himself against Mr. Fox's charge of having violated the constitution, by transmitting money to the Emperor of Germany, without the authority of Parliament, 35, to 44, and 46 to 71. Exposes Mr. Combe's ignorance of the duty of a member of Parliament, in servilely following the orders of his constituents, 46. Moves an address on the King's message, announcing the rupture of the negotiation with France, 78. Carries the address against Mr. Fox's amendment, by 212 against 37. 87. Corresponds with the Directors of the Bank, respecting the payment of Treasury bills, 97. Considers it necessary to stop the payment of cash at the Bank, 100. An order in Council issued to that effect, 101. Delivers a message from the King, on the subject, and moves the appointment of a Secret Committee, to investigate the affairs of the Bank, 102. Explains the nature of money transactions between Government and the Bank, 105. Carries his motion against Mr. Sheridan's amendment, by 244 against 86, 106. Introduces a bill, which is immediately passed, for enabling the Bank, for a limited time, to issue notes instead of cash, 110. Justifies his conduct respecting the Bank, against Mr. Grey's motion, 112. States the amount of Bank notes in circulation, from 1783 to



1797, 117. Explains the true principle of banking, 119. Censures some of the opinions of Adam Smith, 121. Proves that the quantity of specie in the country had not been diminished by the war, *ib.* Opposes Mr. Harrison's motion for an inquiry into sinecure places and fees of office, and moves the previous question, which is carried, by 169 against 77, 129. 133. 138. Charged by Mr. Fox with taking sinecure places for himself, 135. Defended against this charge, *ib.* Moves for a grant, to defray the expence incurred by increasing the pay of the seamen, in consequence of the mutiny at Portsmouth, 148. Defends himself against the aspersions of Mr. Grey, on his conduct respecting the mutiny, 149. Moves an address on the King's message, recommending the prevention of sedition and mutiny in the navy, 154. Brings in a bill conformably to the address, 155. Proves the mutiny to have been the effect of a settled system to excite disaffection in the country, *ib.* Brings in a bill for preventing all intercourse with the mutineers, 158. Accused by Mr. Grey of inconsistency on the subject of parliamentary reform, 160. Vindicated from that charge, 161. Obtains a vote of credit for half a million, to meet unforeseen expences, during the recess, 164. Resolves to make another effort for peace with France, 194. Exposes the duplicity and injustice of the French, during the negotiations at Lisle, 209. Expatiates on the horrors of a French invasion, 211. Opens the budget for 1798, 217. Proposes the Income tax, *ib.* Proves Mr. Fox's secession from Parliament to be a violation of duty, 222. Carries the Income-tax bill, by 196 against 71, 223. Proposes a plan for the redemption of the Land-tax, 229. Introduces a bill, conformably thereto, which becomes a law, 235. Exposes the absurdity of Mr. Nicholl's motion, for applying all salaries under 2000*l.* a year to the use of the war, 237. 242. Brings forward a second budget for 1798, 243. Explains the terms of the loan, 245. Adopts measures for resisting the threatened invasion, 248. Speaks in favour of an address to the King on the subject, 255. Supports the bill for securing suspected traitors, 256. Introduces a bill for more effectually manning the navy, 258. Opposed by Mr. Tierney, 259. 262. Replies to that gentleman, 263. Called to order by him, 264. Explains, 266. Receives a challenge from, and fights a duel with, Mr. Tierney, 267. Remarks on this event, 267 to 271. Supports the bill for the regulation of newspapers, 287. Comments on an assertion of Mr. Erskine's, at the Whig Club, 288. Challenges that gentleman to repeat the assertion alluded to in the House of Commons, 290. Persuaded by Mr. Burke, at the commencement of the war with France, to make farther concessions to the Irish papists, 349.



Pitt, Mr. endeavours to form a new confederacy against France, (vol. vi.) 10. Concludes a treaty with the Emperor Paul, *ib.* Opens the Budget, for 1799, 30. 33. Adverts to certain frauds which had been practised, to evade the triple assessment of taxes, 32. Proposes the Income Tax, 34. 39. Combats the opinion, that a tax on the produce of the funds is a violation of the faith of government, 42. Confutes the notion, that a commercial people; cannot be a warlike people, 50. Eulogises the British Constitution, 53. Justifies the principle of the Income Tax, 63 to 79. Defends it from the imputation of establishing a tithe, 74. Carries his proposed resolutions, by 183 against 17, 79. Proposes a subsidy to Russia, of 825,000*l.* 86. Repels Mr. Tierney's conclusions, respecting the object of the war, 87. Detects the inconsistency of that gentleman's arguments, and exposes the fallacy of his ideas, 94. Draws a just character of the French Republic, 96. Introduces two bills, one for renewing the bill to enable the King to detain persons suspected of treason, the other for the suppression of the seditious societies, 117. Projects the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, 134. Speaks in favour of that measure, in opposition to Mr. Sheridan, 137. Shews that the settlement between England and Ireland, in 1782, was not final, 146. 166. 170. Instances the case of the regency, to prove that a difference on important points might subsist between the English and Irish Parliaments, 150. Explains his plan for the Union, 160. Supports his own sentiments in favour of the Union, by those of Mr. Foster, on the question of the commercial propositions, 168. 184. 188. Confutes the objections of Mr. Sheridan and others, against the Union, 191. Proposes eight resolutions, as the ground-work of the intended Union, 210. Complimented by Mr. Sheridan, as an orator, but condemned as a statesman, 216. Carries his resolutions in favour of the Union, by 140 against 15, 217. Moves the previous question, and carries it, by 141 against 45, on Mr. Sheridan's resolutions against the Union, 218. His speech, and resolutions on the Union, transmitted to Ireland, 231. Declared not to have given any pledge, or promise, to support the claims of the Irish Catholics, 242. Devoted, by Mr. Grattan, to "an *immortality* of *eternal* infamy," 246. Proposes that the resolutions voted by the Irish Parliament, respecting the Union, be adopted in England, 253. Explains his sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, 254. Defends the Irish Resolutions, against Mr. Grey's amendment, 261. Moves an Address to the King, founded on the Irish resolutions, 263. Succeeds in the final accomplishment of the Union, 265. Thwarted, in his plans of foreign policy, by



the dereliction of the Austrian cabinet, 391. Defends the conduct of Ministers, in Parliament, for rejecting the pacific overtures of Buonaparté, in 1799-1800, 409. 413. Confutes the arguments of Mr. Erskine, 414, 415. 417, 418. 424. 426, 427. 442. 463, 464. Takes a comprehensive view of the question of aggression, between England and France, 415. Proves, that the dismissal of M. Chauvelin was not the cause of the war, 418. Asserts the rigid neutrality of England towards France, previously to the war, 421. Adverts to the aggressive and hostile conduct of France, towards neutral states, previously to the war with England, 424. Treats the pretended treaty of Pavia as a clumsy forgery, *ib.* Reviews the proceedings of France, from the imprisonment of Louis XVI. to the treaty of Campo Formio, and the surrender of Venice to Austria, *ib.* Contradicts the opinion of Mr. Erskine, that the point on which the former negotiation was broken off, related to the possession of the Austrian Netherlands, 427. Asserts the negotiation to have been broken off, because England refused to recognize the principle, that whatever France, in time of war, had annexed to the Republic, must remain inseparable for ever, and could not become the subject of negotiation, 428. Adverts to the conduct of France, respecting Switzerland, America, Egypt, and Malta, 430. Describes the ruling principles of the French revolution, 432. Asserts the instability of the French government to have been one cause for the rejection of the First Consul's overtures, by the English cabinet, 435. Refers to the memorable speech of Boulay de la Meurthe (see Boulay de la Meurthe) 436. Examines the present state of France, 438. Delineates the character and conduct of Buonaparté, 440. Proves the necessity of entering into the First Consul's personal character, 441. Traces his origin, and progress; and contends that his character affords no security for the observance of treaties, 441 to 459. Expresses his opinion, that a time might arrive, when it would be expedient to treat with Buonaparté, 461. Takes a view of the French finances, 465. Vindicates himself against the charge of inconsistency, in opening a negotiation in 1797, and in refusing to negotiate now, 466. Answered by Mr. Fox, 470. Moves for a grant of 500,000*l.* to subsidize the Emperor of Germany, the Elector of Bavaria, and other powers, 471. Answers Mr. Tierney's call, respecting the object of the war, 472. Answers Mr. Nicholl's observations, respecting a scarcity of corn, 478. Carries his motion for subsidizing the Emperor of Germany, &c. by 162 against 19, 480. Supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, 487. Supports Lord Auckland's bill, for preventing



an adultress from marrying her paramour, 498. View of the policy of, with respect to foreign connexions, at the close of the eighteenth century, 513. 520. Supports the Address of the House of Commons to the King, on the scarcity of corn, in 1800, 526. Deprecates the introduction of party politics, *ib.* Wise principles of political economy, entertained by, *ib.* Proposes a bounty for the importation of corn, 527. Opposes Mr. Tierney's motion for an enquiry into the state of the nation, 536. Determines to resist the Northern confederacy, 540. Avoids a promise for the repeal of the test laws, 545. 547. Remarks on the proposed new test of, 553. Deceived, respecting the Catholic question, 554, 559. Determines to resign, but consents to remain in office, till a new administration shall be arranged, 569. Defends the conduct of Ministers, against the imputations of Mr. Grey, 573. Opens the Budget for 1801, 576. Regrets the partial failure of the Income Tax, 580. Advertises to the prosperous state of the country, 581. Resigns his official situation, 584. Promises to support Mr. Addington's administration, 585. Explains his motives for resigning, 592. 600. Advertises to certain papers, circulated amongst the Irish Catholics, by Lord Cornwallis, 100. General remarks on the conduct and motives of, 610. Defends the preliminary treaty of peace, in 1801, 642. 649. Differs with most of his personal friends, respecting the treaty, 649. Preserves an independent line of public conduct, 651. Defends his financial system against the attacks of Mr. Whitbread, 652. Attacked by Sir Francis Burdett, and defended by Lord Temple, and Mr. Archdall, 652, 653. Attacked by Mr. John Nicholls, 664. Receives the thanks of the House of Commons, on the motion of Sir H. Mildmay, carried by 211 against 52, 657. Anniversary of the birth-day of, commemorated at Merchant Taylors' Hall, *ib.* Motives of, for approving the peace of Amiens, 676. Defends the new war, 681. Enforces the necessity of vigorous measures, *ib.* Deprecates the adoption of a weak and timid system of policy, 684. The advice of, neglected by the new Ministers, 685. Differs from both sides of the House, on Colonel Patten's motion for a vote of censure against Ministers, and moves the previous question, 687, 688. Justification of the conduct of, on this occasion, *ib.* Supports the measures of Ministers, for the defence of the country, but considers them as not sufficiently extensive, 690. Reproves Ministers for not rendering the volunteers more effective, 691. Moves for papers, with a view to an inquiry into the criminal neglect of the Admiralty, 692. Proves the existence of that neglect, 693. Extols Lord St. Vincent's naval character, 699. Answers Mr. Sheridan's defence of that nobleman, *ib.* Proves the reduced state of



the navy, since the peace of Amiens, 700. Loses his motion, respecting the Admiralty, by 200 against 130, 701. Receives overtures from Mr. Addington, 703. Stipulates for the admission of the Lords Spencer and Grenville, and Mr. Windham, into the new ministry, should one be formed, 704. Declines the acceptance of Mr. Addington's offer, in consequence of his objecting against those statesmen, *ib.* Supports Mr. Fox's motion, respecting the defence of the country, in 1804, 707. Differs from Mr. Fox, on the power of the King to call his subjects to arms, in case of invasion, 708. Opposes Mr. Yorke's motion for the suspension of the army of reserve act, *ib.* Commissioned by his Majesty to form a new administration, *ib.* Presses the King to admit Mr. Fox into the cabinet, but does not succeed, 709. Forms a new ministry, without the assistance of either the Fox or Grenville party, 720. Appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, *ib.* Introduces a bill, for creating an additional force, with a view to continental co-operation, 728. Opposed by the Addington and Grenville parties, 729. Refuses to obey Mr. Sheridan's call for resignation, and pledges himself to retain his place, 733, 734. Strengthens the connexion between this country and Russia, and lays the foundation of a new confederacy against France, 735. Demands a categorical answer from Spain, respecting her armaments, &c. 741. Defends the conduct of the English government, respecting the dispute with Spain, 742. Carries various resolutions on the subject, 743. Corrects an erroneous statement of Mr. Sheridan's, respecting a pledge to the Catholics, 745. Opposes the Catholic petition, 757. Acknowledges the influence of the Romish priests, in exciting rebellion in Ireland, 758. Vindicates his conduct, in advancing money to Messrs. Boyd and Benfield, 764. Indemnified for that act, by Parliament, 765. Honourable conduct of, at the time of Lord Melville's trial, 793. Moves for a select committee, to consider the tenth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, *ib.* Loses his motion by the Speaker's casting vote, *ib.* Supports the proposal for substituting an impeachment, instead of a criminal information, against Lord Melville, 795. Refuses Lord Sidmouth's request, to appoint the Earl of Buckinghamshire First Lord of the Admiralty, 796. Illness of, 798. Accomplishes a new confederacy against France, *ib.* Thwarted in his plans, by the reverses of the confederate armies, 799. Sends Lord Harrowby to Berlin, in the hope of persuading the King of Prussia to join the confederacy against France, 800. Proceeds to Bath, for the recovery of his health, 802. Returns to Putney, 803. Last illness of, *ib.* Death of, 808. Character of,



809. The remains of, ordered, by Parliament, on the motion of Mr. Lascelles, to be interred at the public expense, 817. The debts of, ordered to be paid by Parliament, *ib.* Account of the pecuniary affairs of, 818. Funeral of, 819.
- Pitt administration, (see Administration, Pitt)
- Pius, Pope, remonstrance of, to the Emperor of Germany, on his religious innovations, i. 201.
- Places and pensions, plan for the abolition of, *iv.* 73. Debates and observations respecting the, *ib.* 73 to 78. Economy of Mr. Pitt, respecting, *ib.* 76. Motion lost, *ib.* 78. Absurdity of Mr. Harrison's plan for taxing, exposed, *iv.* 269.
- Plowden, Mr. statement of, respecting the appointment of Mr. Burke's son to be secretary to the Catholic committee, v. 348. Accuses Dr. Duigenan of bigotry against the Catholics, v. 355.
- Po, passage of the, by the French, in 1796, *iv.* 574.
- Poiton, twenty females from, guillotined, *iv.* 189.
- Poland, affairs of, in 1792, *iii.* 198. Revolution in, *ib.* 200. Entered by a Russian army, *ib.* 207. New constitution of, destroyed, *ib.* Account of the troubles in, in 1795, *iv.* 343. Invasion and subjugation of, *ib.* 346, 347. Extinction of the monarchy of, *ib.* 347. Partition of the kingdom of, *ib.* 348.
- Pole, Colonel, drives the rebels from Castlecomer, v. 483.
- Police, new system of, introduced into the metropolis, *iii.* 132. Remarks on the, *ib.*
- Pondicherry, surrender of, to the English, *iii.* 491.
- Ponsonby, Mr. explanation of the intended parliamentary conduct of, subsequently to the recovery of the King, *ii.* 228. Refuses to communicate with the Marquis of Buckingham, *ib.* 229. Dismissed from office, and joins the Opposition, *iv.* 312. Received as the adviser of Earl Fitzwilliam, *ib.* 314. Opposes Mr. Hobart's bill for granting the elective franchise, &c. to the Irish Catholics, v. 355. Opposes the Irish Union, *vi.* 247.
- Pope, the, contribution of, to Buonaparté, in 1796, *iv.* 585. Makes peace with France, *ib.* 608. Attempts to avert the vengeance of France, v. 556. Implores Divine assistance, *ib.* 558. Forbids his subjects to resist the French, *ib.* 565. Sent from Rome, by General Berthier, *ib.* 569. Supremacy of the, opinion of Dr. Troy respecting, *vi.* 562. Cowardice of the, in crowning Buonaparté Emperor of the French, *ib.* 728.
- Popery, low state of, in Ireland, during the administration of the Earl of Halifax, v. 297.
- Popham, Capt. destroys the sluices of the Bruges canal, in 1798, v. 590.



- Population, account of the, of each county, iii. 517.
- Porte, spirited manifesto of the, after the victory of the Nile, vi. 8. 13. Firm conduct of the, respecting the French expedition to Egypt, ib. 16, 17.
- Portland, the Duke of, supports the motion of the marquis of Abercorn, in favour of the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, iii. 185. Appointed Secretary of State, iv. 164. Appointed President of the Council, in 1801, vi. 584. Ditto, in 1804, ib. 720. Retires from that office, ib. 795.
- Porto Fornio, defeat of the Neapolitans at, vi. 26.
- Portsmouth, mutiny at, in 1797, v. 139 to 148. Debate respecting the, ib. 148 to 150.
- Potatoes, amount of the tithe of, in Ireland, v. 308.
- Poussielgue, General, letter of, to Merlin, from Egypt, recommending a peace with England and the Porte, vi. 313.
- Powerscourt, Lord, moves an amendment to the Earl of Glandore's address, in the Irish Parliament, on the Union with England, vi. 158.
- Powis, Mr. moves an address to the throne, respecting a change of administration, i. 137. Opposes the propositions of Mr. Pitt, respecting the regency, ii. 148.
- Prague, the city of, taken by General Suworow, iv. 347.
- Prerogative, Royal, remarks on the, i. 85. 89. 94.
- Presburgh, the treaty of, account of, vi. 800.
- Presbyterians, the Irish, unite with the Papists, and commit dreadful outrages, v. 368. Motives of the, for so doing, ib.
- Press, influence of the, in the destruction of the French monarchy, iii. 242. Important influence of the, neglected by Mr. Pitt, iv. 391. Remarks on the importance and profligacy of the British, v. 273. Regulations respecting the liberty of the, vi. 120. Licentiousness of the British, complained of, by Buonaparté, ib. 661. 663.
- Presses, printing, to be registered, vi. 122.
- Price, Dr. conduct of, at the Revolution Society, ii. 427.
- Priestley, Dr. the authority of, for the danger to which the Church is exposed, quoted in the House of Commons, i. 390. Hopes for the extirpation of the Established Church, iii. 65. Resolves to commemorate the destruction of the Bastile, at Birmingham, ib. 66. Demolition of the house of, by the mob, ib. 68. The losses of, made good by the hundred, ib. 70. Strictures on the character of, ib. 72. Abjures his country, and retreats to America, ib. 73.
- Priests, massacre of, at Paris, in September, 1792, iii. 258.
- Priests, foreign, removal of, from Rome, v. 574.
- Priests, the Roman, made responsible for the peace of their districts, v. 574.



- Priests, loyal, promulgation of a law respecting, v. 575.
- Princes, German, pacific conduct of the, iii. 226.
- Princess Royal of France, liberation of the, iv. 365.
- Principles, revolutionary, progress of, in England, iii. 60.
- Prisoners, dreadful state of, in France, iv. 189.
- Prisoners, State, trial and acquittal of, iv. 223, 224.
- Prisons, French, forced by the mob, ii. 360.
- Proclamation, a, for preventing seditious meetings and writings, iii. 155. 176. By Dumouriez, to the Hollanders, ib. 416. Against Sedition, Appendix, ib. 517. Issued by government for apprehending the authors of the attack upon the King, in 1795, iv. 404. An Irish, against treasonable associations, v. 384.
- Protest, the, of sixteen Irish Peers, against the regency of the Prince of Wales, ii. 217. Of Earl Fitzwilliam, against a negotiation for peace with France, (Appendix B.) v. 600.
- Protestants, alarm of the Irish, in 1792, v. 340. Letter to the, ib. 341. Massacre of the, at Scullabogue, ib. 463. Murder of the, in the rebel camp at Vinegar Hill, and at Wexford, ib. 467, 468. Extermination of the, threatened by the United Irishmen, vi. 105.
- Protestants, French, edict for indulgences to, ii. 10.
- Protestants and Catholics, observations on the relative numbers of the, in Ireland, vi. 241.
- Prussia, jealousy of, respecting the revolutionary proceeding in Holland, i. 205. Death of the King of, ib. 430. Declaration of, respecting France, iii. 102. Subsidiary treaty with, defended by Mr. Pitt, iv. 101. Reflections on the conduct of, in the dismemberment of Poland, ib. 348. Base conduct of, respecting the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, vi. 725.
- Prussia, the King of, opposes the Duke of Brunswick's military plans, in 1792, iii. 261. Makes peace with France, in 1795, iv. 345. Takes Cracow, ib. 346. Obligated to raise the siege of Warsaw, ib. Invades Hanover, vi. 617.
- Prussia and Austria, combined forces of, enter France, iii. 259. Evacuate the French territory, ib. 269.
- Prussia and England, treaty of defensive alliance between, i. 504. 538.
- Pulteney, Sir W. objects to the sending of money to foreign powers, without the previous consent of Parliament, v. 44.

## Q.

Queen, the plan of the regency presented to the, ii. 181.



**Quesnoy**, the fortress of, reduced by the Austrians, iii. 488. Surrender of, to the French, iv. 184. Cowardice of the Commander of, ib.

**Quiberon**, account of the disastrous expedition against, iv. 356. The French royalists defeated at, ib. 358.

**Quinnette**, one of the four commissioners detained by General Dumouriez, account of, iii. 434.

## R.

**Raisins**, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579.

**Rapacity**, extraordinary instance of, in one of the new democratic party in Ireland, v. 298.

**Rastadt**, meeting of the Congress at, v. 539. Termination of the, vi. 314.

**Rebellion**, Irish, commencement of the, v. 368. 455. End of the, ib. 491. (See Rebels.)

**Rebellion**, American, i. 3.

**Rebels**, Irish, proceedings of the, v. 368. Attack the King's troops, ib. 369. Attempt to assassinate the Lords Justices Fitzgibbon and Foster, ib. 379. Instigate the French to invade Ireland, ib. 383. Plunder the King's stores at Belfast, ib. 384. Hold a meeting at Shane's Castle, ib. 440. Announce the establishment of an union with the disaffected in England and Scotland, ib. Send O'Connor and O'Coigley to Paris, to obtain the assistance of a French force, ib. 443. Plans of the, disclosed to government, by Mr. Reynolds, ib. 447. Seizure of several of the, in Dublin, ib. 449. 454. Project a general rising, and prepare for an attack on the capital, ib. 450. Form a conspiracy for murdering Lord Clare, ib. 452. Plan of the, to attack the garrison and city of Dublin, ib. 456. Commence their operations, ib. Attack the towns of Naas, Carlow, Baltinglass, Monasteven, and Clare, ib. 459. Beaten by the militia and yeomen, ib. Defeated, by Sir James Duff, on the Curragh of Kildare, ib. 460. Take the towns of Enniscorthy and Wexford, ib. 460, 461. Joined by Catholic deserters, from the yeomanry corps, ib. Defeat Colonel Walpole's detachment, ib. Defeated at the battle of Ross, and compelled to retreat, ib. 463. Massacre two hundred and twenty-one Protestants, and five Catholics, at Scullabogue, ib. Defeated at Arklow, ib. 464. Attack the town of Antrim, ib. 465. Defeated in the county of Down, ib. Fortify Vinegar Hill, ib. Attacked by the loyalists, and compelled to retreat, ib. 466. Commit great outrages at Enniscorthy, ib. 467. Murder ninety-seven Protestants at Wexford, ib. 468. Attack the town of Castle-comer, ib. 483. Driven from thence, by Sir Charles Asgill



- and Colonel Pole, ib. Make an inroad into the county of Meath, ib. 484. Hunted from place to place, and destroyed, ib. Twenty of the leaders of the, sent to Fort George, in Scotland, ib. 486.
- Redesdale, Lord, appointed Lord Chancellor of Ireland, in 1804. vi. 721. Opposes the Catholic petition, ib. 746.
- Reeves, Mr. undertakes to establish a loyal association, iii. 283. Prosecution of, relating to his anonymous pamphlet, entitled "*Thoughts on the English Government*," iv. 463. Attacked by Mr. Sturt, as guilty of treason, ib. 464. His comparison of the British Constitution to a tree, proved not to be a new thought, ib. Censured by Mr. Sheridan, who moves that his pamphlet is a seditious libel, reflecting on the revolution, and constituting a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons, ib. 467. Censured also by Messrs. Jekyll, Erskine, and Courtenay, ib. 469. Defended by Mr. Windham, who exposes the motives of the whigs in attacking him, ib. 470. His pamphlet analysed by Mr. Windham, ib. 472. Ungenerously treated by Mr. Pitt, who supports Mr. Sheridan's motion, which is carried in an amended form, ib. 476. 483. Pronounced by a committee of inquiry, of the House of Commons, to be the author of the Pamphlet in question, which is proposed, by Mr. Sheridan, to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, ib. 483, 484. Proposed, by Mr. Dundas, to be prosecuted by the Attorney General, ib. 489. Tried and acquitted, ib. 490. Publishes a second pamphlet, in vindication of the first, ib. 491.
- Reform, a plan of, proposed by Louis XVI. ii. 310. Reflection on the, ib. 317.
- Reform, Parliamentary, Mr. Pitt's plan respecting, i. 215. Supported by Mr. Fox, with certain exceptions, ib. 225. Rejected by the House of Commons, ib. 226. Mr. Flood's project for, ii. 467. Opposed by Mr. Windham and Mr. Pitt, ib. 468, 469. Withdrawn, ib. 470. Speech of Mr. Pitt respecting, iii. 136. Plan of, proposed by Mr. Grey, ib. 438. Moved for by Mr. Grey, in 1797, v. 160. Opinions of Mr. Pitt respecting, vi. 254.
- Regency, the Prince of Wales's right to the, asserted by Mr. Fox, ii. 24. 29. Resisted by Mr. Pitt, ib. 25. 29. A committee appointed to search for precedents, and to examine the legitimacy of his Royal Highness's claim to the, ib. 30. 32. Debates respecting the, ib. 32 to 113. Mr. Pitt's letter to the Prince of Wales, on the subject of the, ib. 114. Answer of his Royal Highness, ib. 117. Farther Debates respecting the, ib. 130 to 206. Resolutions of Parliament respecting the, laid before the Prince of Wales and the Queen, ib. 181.



- Regency Bill, the, commission proposed by Lord Camden, for giving the Royal assent to, ii. 187. Violently attacked by Mr. Burke, ib. 189. Reflections on Mr. Pitt's conduct, during the discussion on the, ib. 206. Debates respecting the, in the Irish Parliament, ib. 212.
- Register, Annual, correction of a mistake in the, respecting Steiguer, the Swiss patriot, v. 519. Absurdity of the, for 1799, respecting Buonaparté and Sir Sidney Smith, exposed, vi. 302.
- Regnault, Aimée Cecile, pretended conspiracy of to assassinate Robespierre, iv. 199. Execution of, with 60 other persons, ib. 200.
- Rejoicing, a general, on the King's recovery, ii. 239.
- Remonstrance, a, from the House of Commons to the King, on his declining to accede to their wishes for a change of administration, carried by a majority of one, i. 147.
- Report, the tenth, published by the Commissioners of naval inquiry, vi. 769.
- Reporters, Parliamentary, instance of the insufficiency of, iv. 77.
- Republic, Batavian, the constitution of the, changed by the French directory, v. 576.
- Republic, Cisalpine, revolution in the, v. 547. New constitution of the, ib. 550. Becomes a province of France, ib. 552.
- Republic, Helvetic, establishment of the, by General Brune, v. 526.
- Republic, the Neapolitan, proclaimed, vi. 28.
- Republic, Roman, establishment of the, v. 567. 571.
- Reserve, army of, motion respecting the, vi. 708. Measures adopted by Mr. Pitt, for raising the, ib. 728.
- Retaliation, defence of the system of, respecting the murder of the French emigrants, iv. 80. 87.
- Revolution, commencement of the French, i. 434.
- Revolutionary principles, (see Principles, Revolutionary.)
- Revolutionary society, (see Society, Revolutionary.)
- Revolutionary tribunal, (see Tribunal, Revolutionary.)
- Rewbell, character of the French Jacobins by, iv. 220.
- Reynolds, Mr. Thomas, discloses the plans of the Irish rebels to government, v. 447. Arrested, and conveyed to Dublin, ib. 452.
- Richmond, plan of the Duke of, for fortifying the Dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth, i. 288.
- Richter, John, committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116. Discharged, ib. 225.
- Right-Boys, Irish, proceedings of the, v. 305.



"*Rights of Man*," Paine's, appearance of, iii. 7. Analysis of the, by Mr. Burke, ib. 33. Circulated by the dissenters, ib. 61. First part of the, reason for not prosecuting the, ib. 182.

Riots of 1780, i. 8.

Riots, account of, occasioned by the scarcity of corn, in 1800, vi. 521.

Riou, Captain, the death of, at the battle of Copenhagen, vi. 620.

Rivoli, defeat of the Austrians at, in 1797, iv. 597.

Robespierre, first conspicuous appearance of, ii. 503. Heads the Jacobins, ib. 472. 492. Charges the Girondists with being the accomplices of General Dumouriez, ib. 492. Charges Brissot with occasioning the war between England and France, iv. 13. Despotism of, ib. 187. Moves for a decree in the national convention, to sanction the freedom of religious worship, ib. 197. Painted with the face of the Creator, by David, ib. 199. Pretended conspiracy against, ib. Receives fulsome addresses of congratulation on his escape, ib. 200. Forms a scheme for the assassination of his enemies, ib. 206. Enters the hall of the convention, for the last time, ib. 207. Attacked by Tallien, ib. 208. Sent to the prison of the Luxembourg, ib. 211. Refused to be received by the gaoler, ib. 211. Rescued by the mob, ib. Declared an outlaw, by the convention, ib. 212. Fired at, and taken, by a soldier, ib. 213. Condemned, and executed, with 20 of his adherents, without a trial, ib. 214. State of parties in France, after the death of, ib. 215.

Robin, a round, signed by Mr. Ponsonby and his friends, in Ireland, iv. 311.

Roche, Father, activity of, in the Irish rebellion, v. 468. Taken, tried, and executed, ib. 471.

Rochester, the Bishop of, opposes the bill for allowing Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters to act as officers in the supplementary militia, v. 163. Opposes Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 491. Supports Lord Auckland's bill for preventing the marriage of an adulteress with her paramour, vi. 498.

Rockingham administration, formation of the, i. 13.

Rockingham, death of the Marquis of, i. 14.

Rœderer, conferences of, with Buonaparté and Sieyes, vi. 365.

Roiz, General, death of, vi. 631.

Roland, obtains a pension from the National Assembly, iii. 242. Suicide of, ib. 506. Execution of Madame, ib.



- Rolle, Mr. revives the subject of the reported marriage of the Prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert, ii. 172. Proposes a clause in the Regency bill, for excluding from the regency any person proved to be married, either in law, or in fact, to a papist, ii. 192. Ridiculed by Mr. Courteney, and abused by Mr. Grey, ib. Defended by Mr. Pitt, 398.
- Rolls, Master of the, Address of, respecting the attempts which had been made to weaken the obedience of his Majesty's subjects, iii. 176.
- Roman Republic. (See Republic, Roman.)
- Rombaud, General, death of, at Acra, vi. 293.
- Rome, determination of the French to revolutionize, v. 552. Insurrection in, ib. 554. Invasion of, by the Cisalpine troops, ib. 556. Entrance of the French into, ib. 562. 565. Subjugation, and destruction of the government of, ib. 566. Appointment of seven Consuls in, ib. 571. A Jacobin club established in, ib. 573.
- Rose, Mr. adduces proofs of the economical arrangements of Mr. Pitt, respecting places and pensions, iv. 76. Refutes Mr. Sheridan's charge, of holding places to the amount of 10,000*l.* a year, v. 133. Charges Mr. Fox with selling two sinecure places, to pay a gaming debt, ib. 177. Calculations of, respecting exports and imports, vi. 31. Appointed one of the paymasters of the forces, in 1804, ib. 721.
- Rose, (jun.) Mr. opposes the renewed vote of thanks to Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, at Martinique, iv. 341.
- Ross, defeat of the Irish rebels at, v. 463.
- Rouchon, manly speech of, in the hall of the Council of Five Hundred, vi. 357. Opposes the proposal for confiscating the property of the transported deputies, ib. Stigmatises the attempt, as surpassing the deeds of Heliogabalus and Nero, in cruelty, ib. Hooted out of the hall, ib. 359. Calls Crochon an ass, ib.
- Rowan, Mr. Hamilton, escape of, from Newgate, in Ireland, v. 370.
- Royalists, firm conduct of the French, in the National Assembly, iii. 97.
- Ruffin, M. the French ambassador at the Porte, asserts the object of the expedition to Egypt to be the punishment of the Beys, and of the English, vi. 16, 17.
- Rumbold, Sir Thomas, a bill of pains and penalties brought in against, i. 48. Heard in his defence, and the bill dropped, ib. 49.
- Russell, Thomas, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Russia, the Empress of, writes to the King of Prussia, to pre-



vent his interference in favour of the Dutch, i. 208. At war with Turkey, Sweden, and Denmark, ib. 450. Tyrannical conduct of the Empress of, respecting Poland, iv. 343. Reflections on the conduct of, in the dismemberment of Poland, ib. 348. Favourable disposition of, in 1798, vi. 10. A subsidy to, proposed by Mr. Pitt, ib. 86. Opposed by Mr. Tierney, ib. Engagement of, to furnish 23,000 men for the assistance of Austria, ib. 314. Termination of the difference between England and, in 1801, ib. 623. Remonstrance of the Emperor of, respecting the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, ib. 725. Accession of, to the new confederacy against France, ib. 798. The Emperor of, refuses to accede to the terms of the armistice, proposed by Buonaparté, after the battle of Austerlitz, ib. 800.

Russia and Turkey, negotiations for a peace between, iii. 14. Peace concluded, ib. 29.

Russian Armament, (see Armament, Russian.)

Russians, imprudent courage of the, in the Helder expedition, vi. 344. Misconduct of the, ib. 346, 347.

Ryan, Captain, death of, by a wound, in attempting to secure Lord E. Fitzgerald, v. 454.

Ryder, Mr. Dudley, attends Mr. Pitt, as second, in his duel with Mr. Tierney, v. 267. Supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487. Appointed Treasurer of the Navy, in 1801, ib. 584.

## S.

Safety, Public, the French Committee of, iv. 187.

Saints, capture of the, in the West Indies, iv. 187.

Sandwich, the mutineers of the, return to their duty, v. 153.

Salt, new duty on, v. 246.

Santerre, appearance of, in the hall of the National Assembly, on the 20th of June, 1792, iii. 250. Proceeds, with a mob, to attack the royal palace, ib.

Sardinia, the King of, dethroned, iii. 414. Subsidiary treaty with, iv. 45. Parliamentary Debates on the treaty, ib. The King of, makes peace with France, in 1796, ib. 573. The kingdom of, united to France, vi. 660.

Saxe Cobourg, the Prince of, explains the views of the allies, respecting the French nation, iii. 427. Defeats the French in the neighbourhood of Aix-la-Chappelle, ib. 473. At the request of General Dumouriez, issues a proclamation to the French soldiers, ib. 481. Revokes his proclamation, and declares the armistice at an end, ib. 483.

Saurin, Mr. accuses Ministers, during the debates on the



- Irish Union, of "unfurling the bloody flag of rebellion," vi. 252.
- Schauenbourg, the French General, enters Switzerland, v. 514. Determines to attack the Swiss, before the expiration of the truce, which had been agreed to with General Brune, ib. 515. Sends an infamous summons to the garrison of Soleure, ib. Captures Fribourg and Soleure, ib. 517. Succeeds General Brune, in the command of the French army in Switzerland, ib. 530. Enters into a treaty with the smaller Swiss cantons, ib. Excites an insurrection, ib. 532. Attacks, and ravages, the canton of Unterwalden, ib. 534, 535. Destroys the monument of William Tell, ib. 537. Enters the cantons of Schwitz and Zug, ib. 538.
- Schauffhausen, change of the constitution of, v. 513. Evacuation of, by the French, in 1799, vi. 318. Destruction of the bridge of, ib.
- Scheldt, attempt to force the passage of the, by the Imperial troops, i. 207. Navigation of the, opened, iv. 255.
- Scherer, General, successive defeats of, in Italy, by Generals Kaim and Kray, vi. 322, 323, 324, 325. Retreats beyond the Mincio, ib. 325. Superseded in his command, by General Moreau, ib. 326.
- Schwitz, the canton of, appeals to the French Directory, against the alteration of its government, v. 526. Refuses the civic oath, proposed by General Schauenbourg, ib. 533. The inhabitants of, disarmed by the French, ib. 538.
- Scotch Estates, (see Estates, Scotch.)
- Scott, Sir W. supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 487. Opposes the Catholic petition, ib. 753.
- Scripture, horrible perversion of, by Earl Stanhope, iv. 102.
- Scullabogue, massacre of the Protestants at, v. 463.
- Seal, the Great, taken from Lord Thurlow, and placed in the custody of three commissioners, iii. 190.
- Seamen, British, increase of, iv. 157. Mutiny amongst the, at Portsmouth, and at the Nore, in 1797, v. 138 to 148, and 150 to 153. Obtain an increase of wages, ib. 148. Debates respecting the, ib. 148 to 150, and 153 to 160.
- Secrecy, a Committee of, appointed to examine the books and papers of the seditious societies, seized by government, iv. 117. First report of the, ib. Second report of the, ib. 152. A new Committee of, appointed in 1799, to examine documents respecting a seditious conspiracy, vi. 100. Report of the, ib. 101.
- Sedition, progress of, in England and Scotland, iv. 5. 7. Opinions on, by Mr. Adam, the Lord-Advocate of Scotland,



- Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Dundas, *ib.* 37 to 43. Rapid progress of, in England, *ib.* 221, 222.
- Sedition and Treason, the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing, *iv.* 415, 416. Opposed by Messrs. Fox, Sheridan, Grey, &c. *ib.* 424. 432. 440, 441. 445. 447. 451. 459. 464. 466. Supported by Sir Francis Bassett, Lord Mornington, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Grant, 430. 433. 443. 449. 452.
- Sedition and Treason Acts, repeal of the new, proposed, and resisted, *v.* 125, 126, 127, 128.
- Sedition and Treason Bills, new, proposed, and passed, in 1799, *vi.* 117. 122.
- Seguier, M. opinion of, respecting the French philosophers and economists, *i.* 438.
- Seignior, the Grand, issues a manifesto, after the victory of the Nile, *vi.* 8. 13.
- Sens, Archbishop of, burnt in effigy, by the Parisian populace, *ii.* 251.
- Sentinel, the, a libellous French paper, established, *iii.* 242.
- Seringapatam, capture of, by the English, *vi.* 306.
- Servants, the Roman Catholic, engaged in the Irish rebellion, *v.* 459.
- Seymour, Lord Hugh, takes the Dutch colony of Surinam, in 1799, *vi.* 352.
- Shane's Castle, meeting of the Irish Rebels at, *v.* 440.
- Sheares, Henry and John, apprehension of, *v.* 454. Trial, and execution, of, *ib.* 485.
- Sheffield, Lord, moves, that dissertations on the French Constitution are not regular, or orderly, in discussion, on the Canada bill, *iii.* 36. Seconds Mr. Dundas's motion, for directing the Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. Reeves, for the publication of his "*Thoughts on the English government*," *iv.* 489.
- Sheridan, Mr. opposes the Duke of Richmond's plan for fortifying the Dock-yards, *i.* 291. Opposes Mr. Pitt's plan for a permanent sinking fund, 300. Opposes Mr. Pitt's financial statements for the year 1787, 399. Opens the third charge against Mr. Hastings, respecting the Princesses of Oude, 412. Opens the seventh charge against that gentleman, relating to the receipt of bribes and presents, 420. Opposes the statements of Mr. Pitt, respecting the Budget of 1788, 486.
- Sheridan, Mr. personally attacks Mr. Pitt, on the subject of the Regency, *ii.* 111. 149. Controverts the financial statements of Mr. Pitt, for 1789, 246. Praises the French Revolution, 445. Moves for the repeal of the



Tobacco Act, 470. Opposes Mr. Pitt's favourable representation of the revenue, for 1790, 476. Panegyrises the French Revolution, 573.

Sheridan, Mr. renews his former panegyrics on the French Revolution, iii. 22. Proposes a string of resolutions in opposition to Mr. Pitt's financial statements, 1791, 57. Seconds Mr. Fox's motion for entering into a negotiation with the French Republic, 300. Deprecates the act of cruelty about to be committed in France, by the trial and murder of the King, 301. Moves for an enquiry into the existence of seditious practices, 349. Abuses the memorial presented by Lord Auckland and the Austrian Minister to the States General of Holland, respecting the French regicides ; and moves an address, beseeching his Majesty to disavow the sentiments contained in that memorial, 424. His motion negatived, 436. Supports Mr. Grey's motion for a reform in Parliament, 461.

Sheridan, Mr. imputes the cruelties of the French government to the despotism of the monarchy, iv. 15. Asserts the pacific disposition of France, 17. Magnifies the defeats of the allies, and deprecates their victories, 19. Presents a petition from Palmer, the convict, praying the relief of Parliament, 39. Charges Ministers with neglecting the defence of Nova Scotia, 45. Denies the legality of voluntary contributions for the defence of the country, 54, 55. Repels the charge of Messrs. Windham and Burke, of favouring the views of the enemy, 57. Opposes the bill for embodying the French Emigrants, on the ground of cruelty, and deprecating a system of retaliation, 79. Terms Mr. Pitt the British Barrere, and the Committee of Secrecy the Committee of Public Safety, 135. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion, for the detention of persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, *ib.* Threatens to withdraw from Parliament, should Mr. Pitt's treasonable conspiracy bill be suffered to pass, 140. Proposes a bill for enabling Roman Catholics to hold commissions in the Army and Navy, by abolishing the existing test, and by substituting a new oath in its stead, 154. Supports the resolutions of Mr. Fox, in condemning the war, and censuring the conduct of Ministers, 161. Declares the traitorous designs, imputed to the seditious clubs, to be fabulous plots and forged conspiracies, *ib.* Attacks the Duke of Portland and his friends, for accepting situations under government, 165. Panegyricizes Mr. Fox, 166. Opposes the clandestine outlawries bill, for the purpose of delivering his sentiments on the state trials, and on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, 233. Moves



for a repeal of the Habeas Corpus suspension act, reprobates the war, denies the existence of all seditious and treasonable conspiracies, and insists that the acquittal of the state prisoners was a full proof of their innocence, 247, 248. Loses his motion, by 144 against 41, 250. Supports Mr. Fox's motion for an enquiry into the state of the nation, in 1795, 281. States his having advised the Prince of Wales not to bind himself by the obligation expressed in the royal message of the year 1787, respecting the non-contraction of future debts, 295. Proposes contributions from the King and Queen, the sale of the Duchy of Cornwall, and a tax on sinecure offices, for the purpose of defraying the Prince of Wales's debts, 300, 301. Infers, from the King's Speech, at the opening of Parliament, in 1795, that the prospect of peace was more distant than ever, 407. Opposes the Pitt and Grenville Bills, for the prevention of treason and sedition, 424. 439. 459. Abuses the police Magistrates, 459. Speaks of Mr. Reeves, the father of the Loyal Associations, as a libeller of the Constitution, 466. Moves, that that gentleman's pamphlet, entitled "*Thoughts on the English Government*," is a high breach of the privileges of the House of Commons, 467. Withdraws that part of his motion, which charges Mr. Reeves's pamphlet with being a libel on the revolution, 483. Moves, that the said pamphlet be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, 484. Loses his motion, by Mr. Dundas's amendment, 490. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's motion for an address of thanks to his Majesty, respecting a negotiation for peace, 497. Loses his amendment, 499. Supports Mr. Grey's motion for the impeachment of Ministers, in 1796, 526.

Sheridan, Mr. objects to Mr. Pitt's plan for raising a supplementary militia, v. 29. Supports Mr. Fox's motion, that ministers had betrayed their trust, &c. in sending money to the Emperor of Germany, without the authority of Parliament, 73. The inaccuracy and misrepresentation of, on the subject, exposed, 74. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's motion for a Secret Committee to investigate the affairs of the Bank, 106. Loses his motion, by 244 against 86, *ib.* Supports Mr. Harrison's motion, for an enquiry into sinecure places and fees of offices, 133. Accuses Mr. Rose of holding places to the amount of 10,000*l.* a year, and is contradicted, and charged with falsehood, by that gentleman, *ib.* Apologises, 134. Censures Mr. Pitt respecting the mutiny at Portsmouth, 148. Supports Mr. Pitt's address for the prevention of sedition and mutiny in the navy, 154. Exposure of the false notions of, respecting



the secession of the opposition from their Parliamentary duties, 216. Opposes the Income Tax, 219. Refuses to vote for the supplies, till Ministers should be dismissed, *ib.* Seconds the proposed address to the King, respecting the threatened invasion, in 1798, 254. Opposes the Bill for securing suspected traitors, 256. Opposes the bill for the regulation of Newspapers, 287.

Sheridan, Mr. opposes the Irish Union, *vi.* 135. Moves an amendment to Mr. Dundas's address, 136. Loses his motion, 154. Compliments Mr. Pitt as an orator, but condemns him as a statesman, 216. Moves an amendment to Mr. Pitt's resolutions, respecting the Union, *ib.* Loses his motion, by 140 against 15, 217. Repeats his arguments against the Union, 222. Asserts that, if a sovereignty do not rest in the people, the House of Brunswick are usurpers, 223. Erroneously adduces the revolution of 1688, in support of his position, *ib.* Corrected by Mr. Windham, 227. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion, for a grant for foreign subsidies, in 1800, 471. Loses a motion for an enquiry into the cause of the failure of the expedition to Holland, 482. Opposes Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, 487. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion respecting the neglect of the Admiralty, in 1803; accuses the mover of factious and party motives, and pronounces a panegyric on Lord St. Vincent, 694. Opposes Mr. Pitt's army of reserve bill, and asserts party contentions to be objects of greater importance than the means of national defence, 730. Calls upon Mr. Pitt to resign, 732. Moves for a repeal of Mr. Pitt's additional force act, 744. Answered by Mr. Pitt, *ib.* Loses his motion by a majority of 140, 745.

Shipping, increase of, *iv.* 157.

Shop Tax, repeal of the, *ii.* 245.

Sidmouth, Lord, succeeds the Duke of Portland, as President of the Council, *vi.* 795. Applies to Mr. Pitt, for the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, for Lord Buckinghamshire, which is refused, *ib.* Retracts his tendered resignation, *ib.* 796. Resigns, and is succeeded by Earl Camden, *ib.* 797.

Sieg, battle of the, in 1796, *iv.* 545.

Sieyes, the Abbé, employed by the Duke of Orleans, to draw up the instructions for his bailiwicks, *ii.* 263. Avows a design of destroying the French nobility, *ib.* 286. Defends the property of the church, *ib.* 398. Election of, as a member of the new French Directory, in June, 1799, *vi.* 361. Meditates a new revolution, *ib.* 362. Holds frequent conferences with Buonaparté, *ib.* 365. Plan of, for a con-



- sular government, *ib.* 383. Made consul, with Buonaparté and Ducos, *ib.* 384. Made a member of the conservative senate, *ib.* 390. His conference with Malouet and Target, respecting the different orders of the States General, *ii.* 285.
- Simms, Robert, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, *v.* 486.
- Simon, the Count de St. spirited conduct of, *ii.* 341.
- Sinclair, Sir John, moves an amendment to the address on the rapture of the negotiation at Lisle, but afterwards withdraws it, *v.* 209. Opposes the Income Tax, *vi.* 60. Fallacy of the arguments of, exposed, *ib.* 61.
- Sinecure places, taxation of, opposed by Mr. Fox, *iv.* 77. Motion for, and debate respecting, an inquiry into, *v.* 129 to 138.
- Sinking Fund, (see Fund, Sinking.)
- Sirr, Major, secures Lord E. Fitzgerald, *v.* 454.
- Skirving, W. trial of, for sedition, *iv.* 8.
- Slave Trade, resolution for taking the, into consideration, *i.* 489. Abolition of the, moved by Mr. Wilberforce, *ii.* 545. Arguments in defence of the, *ib.* 548. The motion negatived, *ib.* Motion for the gradual abolition of the, carried, *iii.* 131.
- Smith, Adam, some of the opinions of, censured by Mr. Pitt, *v.* 121.
- Smith, Mr. W. avows himself an Unitarian, *iii.* 164. Assertions of, respecting the Unitarians, disproved, *ib.* 171. Opposes the Income Tax, *vi.* 60. 62. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion, for a grant for foreign subsidies, in 1800, *ib.* 471. Supports the Catholic Petition, *ib.* 752.
- Smith, Sir Sidney, arrives at Acra, *vi.* 284. Captures the French train of artillery, intended for the siege of Acra, *ib.* 285. Gallantry and promptitude of, during the siege, *ib.* 286, 287, 288. 290. 294. Attempt of the French to assassinate, *ib.* 297. Falsely accused of inhumanity, by Buonaparté, *ib.* 299. Agrees to the convention of El Arisch, *ib.* 510.
- Smollett, comments of, on the right of the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. to assume the prerogative of the King of England, *ii.* 77.
- Smuggling, a bill to prevent, *i.* 171.
- Society, Constitutional, address of the London, to the National Convention, *iii.* 278. Resolutions of the, comparing the Scotch Judges to Judge Jefferys, and threatening them with a similar fate, *iv.* 109. Approve, and circulate, the inflammatory address of the London Corresponding Society, *ib.* 114. The Secretary of, apprehended, and committed to prison, *ib.* 116. Books and papers of, seized, and referred to a Committee of Secrecy, *ib.* 117. History of, laid before Parlia-



- ment, *ib.* Letter of the Secretary of, to the United Political Societies, at Norwich, *ib.* 124.
- Society, the London Corresponding, account of, *iii.* 154. Proceedings of the, *iv.* 6. Send delegates to different parts of the kingdom, *ib.* Meeting of the, in 1794, *ib.* 109. Letter of the Secretary of, to the Secretary of the Constitutional Society, *ib.* Inflammatory address of the, *ib.* 110. Resolve to assemble a general convention of the people, *ib.* 113. Establish a literary magazine, circulate seditious songs, and devote the whole royal family to destruction, *ib.* 114. Propose a central assemblage of delegates, from all the seditious clubs, *ib.* 115. Adopt means for supplying the disaffected with arms, *ib.* The Secretary of, apprehended, and committed to prison, *ib.* 116. Books and papers of the, seized and referred to a Committee of Secrecy, *ib.* 117. History of the, laid before Parliament, *ib.* Send delegates to Scotland, *ib.* 222. Meet at Copenhagen House, *ib.* 426, 430. Account of the publications of the, *ib.* 427. Proceedings of the, subsequent to the passing of the treason and sedition bills, *vi.* 101. Abandon the project of annual Parliaments, and universal suffrage, for more republican objects, *ib.* 103.
- Society, the Revolution, account of, *ii.* 427. Congratulate the French National Assembly, *ib.* 428. Answer of the, to the Friends of the Constitution, and of Equality, in the city of Montpellier, *iii.* 6. Proceedings of the, *ib.* 62. Address of the, congratulating the French on the insurrection of the 10th of August, signed by Dr. Towers, *ib.* 274. Correspondence between the, and the Jacobin clubs in France, proved by Mr. Burke, *ib.* 402.
- Societies, seditious, secret, members of, rendered liable to imprisonment, or transportation, fine, *vi.* 118, 119. Debating, suppression of, *ib.* 119.
- Soleure, change of the constitution of, *v.* 513. Capture of, by the French, *ib.* 517.
- Solicitor General, the, introduces a bill, prohibiting the remittance of money to France, *iv.* 51.
- Sombreuil, M. de, imbecility of, *ii.* 361.
- Sombreuil, Count, taken by the French, at Quiberon, and executed as a traitor, *iv.* 358.
- Somerset, Lord Charles, appointed one of the paymasters of the forces, in 1804, *vi.* 721.
- Song, seditious, part of a, found in the house of Hardy, *iv.* 226.
- Soul, the immortality of the, acknowledged by the French National Convention, *iv.* 198.
- Sound, passage of the, by a British fleet in 1801, *vi.* 617.



Spain, preliminary treaty of peace signed with, i. 22. Applies to France for the fulfilment of the family compact, ii. 488. Not succeeding in her application, complies with the demands of England, respecting Nootka Sound, ib. 489. Debates in Parliament, on the convention with, ib. 511. Makes peace with France, cedes the Spanish part of the island of St. Domingo, and acknowledges the French and Batavian republics, iv. 350. Commencement of the war with, vi. 740. Debates in Parliament, respecting the, ib. 741.

Speaker, inconsistency of the, during the debates on Mr. Pitt's army of reserve bill, vi. 732. Propriety of the casting vote of, respecting Lord Melville, questioned, ib. 793.

Spencer, Earl, appointed Lord Privy Seal, iv. 164. Vindicates Ministers from the charge of having acted dishonourably to the seceders from Opposition, ib. 325. Asserts the sincerity of Ministers, in their attempt to obtain peace, in 1796, v. 89. Supports the Catholic Petition, vi. 746.

Spencer, Lord Charles, appointed one of the Postmasters General, in 1801, vi. 584. Appointed one of the Paymasters general, in 1804, ib. 721.

Spires, surrender of, to the French troops, iii. 414.

Spirits, British, a bill for regulating the duties on, i. 174. New duty on, iv. 50.

Stadtholder, the, stript of his prerogatives, and compelled to take refuge in the town of Breda, i. 281. Deposed, ib. 429. Restored, ib. 433. The office of, abolished in Holland, iv. 255.

Stair, Lord, moves an address to the throne, on the meeting of Parliament, in 1794, iv. 35.

St. John, Mr. opposes the Irish Union, vi. 218.

Stamps, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 584.

Standing armies, Mr. Pitt's remarks on, i. 478.

Stanhope, Earl, opposes the Traitorous Correspondence bill, iii. 411. Moves an address, beseeching his Majesty to disavow the sentiments contained in the memorial, which had been presented by Lord Auckland, to the States General of Holland, respecting the French regicides, ib. 430. Moves an address to his Majesty, beseeching him to acknowledge the French Republic, iv. 36. Panegyrises the French Revolution, ib. Declares himself a Jacobin, ib. 37. Moves for a Parliamentary investigation of the case of Muir and Palmer, convicted of sedition, ib. 44. Condemns the war, and quotes the Bible, to prove that kings are curses on mankind, ib. 102. Severely reprimanded by the Lord Chancellor, ib. Resolution of, unanimously voted to be expunged from the journals of Parliament, ib. 104.



- Stanhope, Mr. pronounces Mr. Grey's manœuvre, in obtaining a majority, in one of the stages of Mr. Pitt's army of reserve bill, to be disgraceful and contemptible, vi. 731.
- Stanislaus, King of Poland, patriotic conduct of, iii. 201. Consents to abolish the new constitution, ib. 207.
- Stanz, desperate action at, v. 534.
- Star, the Union, address of the United Irishmen, copied from, v. 208.
- State Prisoners, (See Prisoners, State.)
- States General, meeting of the French, at Versailles, ii. 271, 272.
- Steigner, the Avoyer, patriotic conduct of, v. 503. 507. 513. 517. 519. Quits the senate, and repairs to the army, ib. 513. 517. Dies, ib. 519.
- Steele, Mr. moves the previous question on Mr. Grey's motion for the impeachment of Ministers, in 1796, iv. 526.
- Steele, Mr. T. appointed one of the paymasters of the forces, in 1801, vi. 584.
- Stone, Mr. J. H. goes to Paris, and presides at a civic feast, iii. 172.
- Story, Admiral, surrenders the Dutch fleet in the Texel, to Admiral Mitchell, in 1799, vi. 343.
- Sturt, Mr. opposes the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing treason and sedition, iv. 450. Censures Mr. Reeves's comparison of the British Constitution to a tree, as treasonable, ib. 464.
- Suabia, entrance of the French into, and retreat from, in 1799, vi. 316. 318. Entrance of the French into, in 1800, vi. 505.
- Suabian troops, cowardice of the, iv. 548.
- Subsidy to Russia, a, proposed by Mr. Pitt, vi. 86. Opposed by Mr. Tierney, ib.
- Suffolk, Lord, opposes the Income Tax, vi. 80.
- Sugar, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579.
- Supplies, motion for postponing the, carried by a majority of twelve, against Ministers, i. 129.
- Surinam, surrender of, to the English in 1799, vi. 352.
- Surrey, Earl, motion of, respecting the formation of a new ministry, i. 35. Resolutions moved by, with the view of effecting the dismissal of Ministers, ib. 101.
- Sutton, Father, activity of, in the Irish rebellion, v. 468.
- Sutton, Sir T. M. appointed Solicitor-General, in 1804, vi. 721.
- Suworow, General, enters Poland, defeats the Polish army, and takes General Kosciuszko prisoner, iv. 346. Reduces Prague and Warsaw, and subjugates the whole kingdom, ib. 347. Arrives in Italy, with 20,000 Russians, in 1799, and assumes the chief command of the Austro-Russian



- army, vi. 326. Defeats the French, on the Adda, ib. 327. Defeats General Macdonald, ib. 329, 330. Is thwarted in his plans, by the Austrian cabinet, ib. 337. Defeats Massena, in several actions, ib. 338. Retreats to Germany, ib. Dies of a broken heart, ib. 502.
- Sweden, at war with Russia, i. 450. Assassination of the King of, iii. 207. Termination of the difference between England and, in 1801, vi. 623. Remonstrance of the King of, respecting the murder of the Duke D'Enghien, ib. 725. Accession of, to the new confederacy against France, ib. 798.
- Sweeny, John, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Sweetman, John, apprehended on charges of high treason, v. 340. Proved to have interested himself, as an agent of the Catholic Committee, in favour of the Defenders, ib. 353. Apprehended, ib. 449. Conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, ib. 486.
- Swiss, happy state of the, prior to the French revolution, v. 499. Determine on neutrality, ib. 502. Depart from the neutral system, to favour the escape of the French troops from Germany, ib. 503. Send General Weiss, to quell the insurrection in the Pays de Vaud, ib. 506. Agree to a truce with General Brune, ib. 514. Gallantry of the, at Berne, ib. 518. New government of the, ib. 528, 529. Sufferings of the, in the canton of Unterwalden, ib. 534, 535.
- Swiss guards, ineffectual attempt to seduce the, ii. 252.
- Switzerland, the constitution of, determined to be subverted by the French, v. 497. Insurrection excited in, ib. 505. Entrance of the French into, ib. 505, 508, 514. Weakness of the government, and great resources of the country of, ib. 510, 516. Advance of the French army in, ib. 513. Order of the government of, for arming the people, ib. 516. The small cantons of, appeal to the French Directory, against the alteration of their government, ib. 526. Formation of the new legislative body, and Directory of, ib. 529. The small cantons of, conclude a treaty with the French, and accede to the new constitution, ib. 530. Final reduction of, ib. 538. Actions in, in 1799, vi. 319.
- Sydney, Lord, supports Lord Minto's motion, for the fine and imprisonment of the printer and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, for a libel on the House of Lords, v. 278.
- Synnot, Father, conduct of, during the Irish rebellion, v. 476.

## T.

- Tagliamento, passage of the, by the French, in 1797, v. 174.
- Talleyrand, M. proves the sincerity of the English government, in wishing to maintain a neutrality, iii. 338. Falsely declares



- to the Turkish ambassador at Paris, contrary to the declaration of the French ambassador at the Porte, that the conquest of Malta was the sole object of Buonaparté's mission to the East, vi. 18. Transmits Buonaparté's letter to the King of England, to Lord Grenville, vi. 395. Declares France not to have been the aggressor in the war, ib. 406. Falsehoods and contradictions of, confuted by the declarations of Robespierre and Brissot, ib. 408.
- Tallien, attacks Robespierre, in the Hall of the French National Convention, iv. 208.
- Tallot, speech of, in the council of five hundred, after the entrance of Buonaparté, vi. 374.
- Target, Malouet, and Sieyes, conference between, respecting the different orders of the States General, ii. 285.
- Tarleton, Colonel, supports General Fitzpatrick's motion, for the liberation of General La Fayette, iv. 92.
- Tarleton, General, censures Ministers for suffering inexperienced youths to raise regiments for rank, iv. 236.
- Tax, Income, proposal of the, v. 217. Debates respecting the, ib. 218 to 225. Proposed by Mr. Pitt, in 1798, vi. 34. 54. Scale of assessment of the, ib. 55. Opposed by Mr. Tierney, Sir J. Sinclair, Sir F. Baring, and Mr. W. Smith, ib. 58. 60, 61, 62. Resolutions respecting the, agreed to without a division, ib. 58. Remarks on the unequal operation of the, ib. 59. Debates on the, ib. 61 to 82. Carried in the House of Commons, by 183, against 17, ib. 79. Opposed in the upper House, by the Lords Suffolk and Holland, and by the Duke of Bedford, ib. 80. Supported by the Lords Auckland, Grenville, and the Chancellor, ib. Passed into a law, ib. 82. Partial failure of the, in 1800, ib. 580.
- Taxes, Assessed, increase of the, in 1798, v. 217.
- Taxes, New, for 1795, iv. 274. Ditto, for 1796, ib. 524. v. 31. Ditto, for 1798, v. 946. Ditto, for 1799, vi. 30. 83. Ditto, for 1801, ib. 579.
- Taylor, Mr. unparliamentary conduct of, iii. 9. Censures the proposed erection of barracks, ib. 398.
- Tea, a new duty on, in 1801, vi. 579. Remarkable increased sale of, after the passing of the Commutation Act, ib.
- Tell, William, the monument of, destroyed by the French, v. 537.
- Temple, Earl, the conduct of, arraigned by the Opposition, i. 89. Expresses his joy at the failure of the negotiation at Lisle, v. 212. Calls upon Mr. Tierney to name the Editor of the Courier, in order that he might be indicted for a libel on government, published in that paper, ib. 283. Account of the first and second administrations of, in Ireland,



- ib. 300. 304. Defends Mr. Pitt, against the attacks of Francis Burdett, vi. 652. Censures the conduct of Ministers, respecting the war with Spain, ib. 743.
- Tennis-Court oath, the, refused to be taken by M. Martin D'Auch, ii. 303.
- Tennant, Wm. conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.
- Terror, the system of, in France, iii. 497. iv. 188.
- Terrorists, efforts of the French, in 1795, iv. 361.
- Test, remarks on Mr. Pitt's proposed new, vi. 553. 558. 595.
- Test and Corporation Acts, new motion for the repeal of the, negatived, ii. 241. Repeal of the, moved by Mr. Fox, ib. 446. 449. Opposed by Mr. Pitt, ib. 449, and by Mr. Burke, ib. 464. The motion rejected, ib. 467.
- Thanksgiving, a general, for the King's recovery, ii. 238.
- Thelwall, John, committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, iv. 116. Trial and acquittal of, ib. 225.
- Themistocles, comparison of, with Buonaparté, vi. 12.
- Thermidorians, appellation of, assumed by the anti-terrorists, iv. 216.
- Theuret, execution of, iv. 191. Declaration of, respecting the necessity of destroying both priests and nobles, ib.
- Thiboelt, Colonel, cowardice and treachery of, iv. 185.
- Thornton, Mr. H. supports Mr. Grey's motion for opening a negotiation with France, in 1795, iv. 264.
- Thornton, Mr. S. supports Lord Belgrave's amendment on Mr. Nicholls's motion respecting the alleged *dismissal* of Mr. Pitt, vi. 656.
- Thurlow, Lord, opposes Mr. Pitt's Revenue bill, and the New Forest Timber bill, iii. 186, 187. Called upon to deliver the seals, ib. 190. Character of, ib. 193. Supports the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, ib. 151.
- Tierney, Mr. opposes the Income Tax, v. 218. vi. 58. Refuses to vote for any supplies till ministers shall be dismissed, v. 220. Pronounces a panegyric on Arthur O'Connor, ib. 257, 258. Opposes the bill for manning the navy, ib. 259, 260. 262. 264. Calls Mr. Pitt to order, ib. 264. Challenges, and fights a duel with him, ib. 267. Speaks in defence of the editor of the *Courier*, respecting a libel on government, ib. 283. Is called upon, by Lord Temple, to name him, ib. Propriety of that call discussed, ib. Refuses to comply with his Lordship's call, ib. 285. 290. 291. Opposes the subsidy to Russia, vi. 86. Inconsistency of the arguments, and confusion of the ideas of, exposed by Mr. Pitt, ib. 87. 94. Opposes Mr. Pitt's motion for a grant for foreign subsidies, in 1800, ib. 471. Calls upon Ministers to define the object of the war, ib. 472. An opinion of,



- that the war could not be just, because it was carried on for the restoration of the House of Bourbon, confuted by the treaty of Paris, of 1783, *ib.* 476. Loses a motion, declaring it to be unjust and unnecessary to carry on the war for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France, *ib.* 481. Loses a motion for an inquiry into the state of the nation, in 1800, by 157 against 37, *ib.* 536.
- Tiles, a new duty on, *iv.* 50.
- Tinnehinch, interview at, between Mr. Grattan and Hughes and Neilson, two of the rebel leaders, *v.* 444.
- Tippoo Sultaun, projects of, for extirpating the British from India, *vi.* 304. Equivocates with Lord Mornington, *ib.* 305. Death of, at Seringapatam, *ib.* 306.
- Tithe, difference between a, and the Income Tax, explained by Mr. Pitt, *vi.* 74.
- Tithes, suppression of, in France, *ii.* 396. Ignorance of Mr. Grattan respecting, *v.* 305. Interesting discussion respecting the Irish, *ib.* 308 to 313. The Duke of Bedford's erroneous opinion respecting, corrected by the Lord Chancellor, *vi.* 82. Remarks upon Mr. Pitt's motion respecting, in Ireland, *ib.* 180.
- Title, the new, assumed by the King of Great Britain and Ireland, at the period of the Union, *vi.* 541. Reflections on the abandonment of the old, *ib.*
- Titles, suppression of, in France, *ii.* 497.
- Tobacco, subjected to the excise, *ii.* 247. 250.
- Tobacco Act, repeal of the, moved by Mr. Sheridan, *ii.* 470. Opposed by Mr. Pitt, *ib.* 471. Motion lost, *ib.* 473. A bill brought in for amending the, *ib.*
- Tobago, capture of, by the English, *iii.* 492.
- Toleration, remarks on Mr. Fox's notion of, *ii.* 559.
- Tone, Mr. Theobald Wolf, statement of, respecting the society of United Irishmen, *v.* 362. Sent to the French Directory, at Paris, by the United Irishmen, *ib.* 380.
- Tonnage, state of, at different periods, *iv.* 156.
- Tooke, Mr. Horne, declares Mrs. Fitzherbert not to be a Papist, *i.* 405. Committed for trial, on a charge of treasonable practices, *iv.* 116. 224. Trial of, for high treason, *ib.* 225. Acquittal of, *ib.*
- Toulon, surrender of, to Lord Hood, *iii.* 490. Evacuation of, *ib.* Massacre of the loyal inhabitants of, *ib.* 490, 491. Account of ships captured and destroyed at, *ib.* The name of, changed to that of Port Mountain, by the French Republicans, *ib.* Debates and observations respecting the disasters at, *iv.* 94 to 100. Motion for an enquiry into the, negatived, *ib.* 100. Sailing of Buonaparté's expedition to Egypt from, *v.* 578.



- Tournay, flight of the French troops from, iii. 235.
- Towers, Dr. remarks on the speech of, at the Unitarian meeting, iii. 162. Signs the address of the Revolution Society, congratulating the French on the insurrection of the 10th of August, ib. 274.
- Townshend, Lord, retrospect of the administration of, in Ireland, v. 298. Creates a rival power to counteract the influence of the aristocracy, ib.
- Trafalgar, the battle of, v. 801.
- Traitorous correspondence, (see Correspondence, traitorous.)
- Traitors, a bill passed, in 1798, for securing and detaining suspected, v. 256.
- Treason, the law of misprision of, explained, v. 445.
- Treason and sedition, the Pitt and Grenville bills for preventing, iv. 415, 416.
- Treason and Sedition acts, repeal of the new, proposed and resisted, v. 125, 126, 127, 128.
- Treason and sedition bills, new, proposed and passed, in 1799, vi. 117, 122.
- Trent, defeat of General Wurmser at, in 1796, iv. 591.
- Trials, State, iv. 223, 224.
- Tribunal, Revolutionary, erection of the, in France, iii. 500. Decree, and debates respecting the, in the National Convention, iv. 201 to 204.
- Troops, French, cowardice and barbarity of the, iii. 235, 236.
- Trouvé, M. sent ambassador to Milan, to frame a new constitution for the Cisalpine republic, v. 549. Throws 400 of the opponents of his code into prison, ib. 550.
- Troy, Dr. obtains a certificate of loyalty for Dr. Caulfield, the Popish Bishop of Wexford, from Lord Cornwallis, v. 475. Account of, and extract from the pastoral letter of, in 1793, respecting the supremacy of the Pope, vi. 561, 562.
- Turkey, at war with Russia and Austria, i. 450. Makes peace with France, in 1801, vi. 635.
- Turkey and Russia, negotiation for a peace between, iii. 14. Peace concluded, ib. 29.
- Turin, the citadel of, seized by the French, v. 577.
- Tyrol, proceedings in the, in 1797, v. 176. Military operations in the, in 1799, vi. 316, 322.
- Tyrone, Lord, moves an address, in the Irish Parliament, in favour of the Union with England, vi. 158.

## V.

- Valenciennes, Surrender of, to the Allies, iii. 485. Surrender of, to the French, iv. 184. Cowardice of the Commander of, ib.



Vansittart, Mr. N. appointed one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, in 1801, vi. 584. Ineffective mission of, to Denmark, in 1801, ib. 616.

Vatican, plunder of the, by the French, in 1798, v. 569.

Vattel, opinion of, respecting the right of one nation to interfere with the interior regulations of another, iv. 85.

Vaubois, General, left by Buonaparté in the command of Malta, v. 581.

Veil, the, a bill proposed, by Sir H. Mildmay, in the House of Commons, for preventing British subjects from taking, vi. 486. Supported by Messrs. Pitt, Bragge, Newbolt, Johnes, Dudley Ryder, Erskine, Perceval, and Sir W. Scott; and opposed by Messrs. Hobhouse, Windham, Sheridan, and Dr. Lawrence, ib. 487. Passed in the House of Commons, ib. 491. Opposed, in the House of Lords, by the Bishop of Rochester, and supported by the Bishop of Winchester, ib. 491. 493. Rejected, ib. 493.

Vendeans, the leaders of the, enter into a treaty with France, and acknowledge the French Republic, iv. 351, 352.

Vereker, Colonel, skirmish of, with the French General, Humbert, at Coloony, v. 489.

Vergennes, M. de, death of, i. 447.

Verona, account of the battle of, in 1799, vi. 322, 323, 325.

Versailles, the Palace of, attacked by a Parisian mob, ii. 412. 416.

Victories, French, ridiculously mentioned, as proofs of the existence of a solid government in France, iv. 35.

Vienne, the Archbishop of, joins the National Assembly, ii. 307. Made Secretary of State, ib. 387.

Villars-en-Cauché, gallant action at, iv. 181.

Vincent, Cape St. account of the victory off, v. 169.

Vincent, Earl St. appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1801, vi. 584. Panegyric on, by Mr. Sheridan, ib. 694. Remarks on the character and conduct of, ib. 698. Exposure of the naval administration of, by Lord Melville, ib. 766. Answer of, to Lord Melville, ib. 768.

Vinegar Hill, defeat of the rebels at, v. 466.

Voluntary contributions, (see Contributions, Voluntary.)

Volunteer companies, the formation of, proposed by Mr. Pitt, iv. 54. A bill for regulating the, introduced by Mr. Dundas, in 1798, v. 251. Carried, ib. Considered, by Mr. Windham to be useless, vi. 691.

Volunteers, the Irish, become a deliberative body, i. 245.

## U.

Ulm, surrender of, to the French, in 1800, vi. 506. Ditto, in 1805, ib. 799.



Ulster, seizure of arms, in the province of, v. 385. Insurrection in, ib.

Union, an, established between the Irish rebels and the disaffected in England and Scotland, v. 440.

Union, the Irish, projected by Mr. Pitt, vi. 134. Supported by Mr. Dundas, ib. 135. Opposed by Mr. Sheridan, ib. Mr. Dundas's Address respecting the, carried without a division, ib. 154. Discussions respecting the, in Ireland, ib. Opposed at a meeting of the Irish bar, by the corporation of Dublin, and by the bankers and merchants of that city, ib. 154. 156. Speech of the Viceroy, on the, at the opening of the Irish Parliament, in January, 1799, ib. 157. Supported by the Earl of Glandore, Lord Tyrone, and Lord Castlereagh; and opposed by Lord Powerscourt, and Sir Laurence Parsons, ib. 157, 158, 159. Address in favour of the, carried, in the Irish House of Lords, without a division, and, in the House of Commons, by a majority of one, ib. 158. Address in favour of the, lost, on the report, by 109 against 104, ib. 159. Plan of the, explained by Mr. Pitt, 160. 210. Opposed by Mr. Sheridan, ib. 216. 222. Mr. Pitt's resolutions in favour of the, supported by Lord Hawkesbury, and carried by 140 against 15, ib. 217. Opposed by Mr. Grey, and Mr. St. John, ib. 217, 218. One hundred and thirty-one, against 19, in favour of the, in the English House of Commons, ib. 230. Address of Parliament, in favour of the, presented to the throne, ib. Speech and resolutions of Mr. Pitt respecting the, transmitted to Ireland, ib. 231. Renewal of discussions on the, in Ireland, in 1800, ib. 234. Motion of Sir Laurence Parsons, deprecating the, in the Irish Parliament, negatived by 138 against 96, ib. 235. Eight resolutions, in favour of the, proposed by Lord Castlereagh, and carried, by 158 against 115, ib. 236. 247. Resolutions in favour of the, proposed by Lord Clare, and carried, in the Irish House of Peers, ib. 251. Full discussion respecting the, in the English Parliament, ib. 253. Mr. Grey's proposed amendment, on Mr. Pitt's address in favour of the, negatived by 236 against 30, ib. 263. Address, in favour of the, agreed to, by both Houses of the English Parliament, ib. 265. Final accomplishment of the, ib. New title assumed by the King, in consequence of the, ib. 541. Augmentation of the Houses of Lords and Commons, at the period of the, ib. 543.

Union Star, treasonable extract from the, v. 440. Loyal persons proscribed in the, ib. 441.

Unionists, Anti, triumph of the Irish, vi. 159.

Unitarians, motion of Mr. Fox, for the relief of the, iii. 156.



- Proceedings of a meeting of the, *ib.* 159. Not entitled to the appellation of Christians, *vi.* 492.  
 United Britons, (see Britons, United.)  
 United Irishmen, (see Irishmen, United.)  
 Unterwalden, the canton of, appeals to the French directory, against the alteration of its government, *v.* 526. Refuses the civic oath, proposed by General Schauenbourg, *ib.* 533. Attacked, and desolated by the French, *ib.* 534, 535.  
 Uri, the canton of, appeals to the French Directory, against the alteration of its government, *v.* 526. Refuses the civic oath, proposed by General Schauenbourg, *ib.* 533.

## W.

- Wages, an increase of, demanded by the mutineers of the navy, in 1797, *v.* 139, 140. Granted, *ib.* 143.  
 Wakefield, Mr. Gilbert, prosecuted and imprisoned for a libel on government, *v.* 287, 289.  
 Wales, Prince of, observations on the nature of the debts of the, *i.* 391. Application to the House of Commons on the subject, *ib.* 359. Connection of, with Mrs. Fitzherbert, *ib.* 359, 396. *ii.* 172. The debts of, settled without the interference of Parliament, *i.* 409. Answer of the, to Mr. Pitt's plan of the regency, *ii.* 117. Declared regent by a majority of the Irish Parliament, *ib.* 213. Receives, and answers, the address of the Irish Parliament, declaring him regent, *ib.* 215. Supports the motion of the Marquis of Abercorn, in favour of the proclamation for preventing seditious meetings and writings, *iii.* 183. Proposed provision for the, *iv.* 293. Royal message respecting the, in 1787, *ib.* Debates respecting the, *ib.* 298 to 305. The Princess of, receives a dower of 50,000*l.* a year, *ib.* 305.  
 Walpole, General, attends Mr. Tierney, as second, in his duel with Mr. Pitt, *v.* 267.  
 Walpole, Colonel, defeated by the rebels, *v.* 461.  
 War, declaration of, against England and Holland, by the French National Convention, *iii.* 345, 350.  
 War, the late, strictures on the origin and progress of, *vi.* 514.  
 War, recommencement of, between England and France, in 1803, *vi.* 668, 674. Different opinions respecting the, *ib.* 676. Examination of the arguments respecting the, *ib.* 677. Commencement of the, with Spain, *ib.* 740.  
 Wardle, Thomas, charged with high treason, *iv.* 224.  
 Warren, Dr. opinion of, respecting the King's illness, *ii.* 128.  
 Warsaw, the city of, besieged by the King of Prussia, *iv.* 346. Taken by the Russians, *ib.* 347.  
 Wartensleben, General, retreat of, in 1796, *iv.* 553.  
 Watt, Robert, trial and execution of, *iv.* 224.



- Warwickshire magistrates, the, vindicated by Mr. Dundas, iii. 168.
- Weiss, General, sent by the Swiss government to quell the insurrection in the Pays de Vaud, v. 506. Cowardly conduct of, ib. 507.
- Weissembourg, the lines of, forced by the Austrians, iii. 489.
- Wellesley, the Marquis, brilliant administration of, in the East, vi. 801.
- Western, Mr. loses a motion, declaring it to be unjust and unnecessary to carry on the war, for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France, vi. 481.
- West Indies, success of the British arms in the, iv. 187.
- Westminster scrutiny, decision respecting the, i. 211.
- Westmoreland, Lord, vindicates the government of Ireland from the aspersions of Earl Fitzwilliam, iv. 316. Neglects to dissolve the Irish National Convention, v. 339. Adopts vigorous measures at the commencement of the rebellion, ib. 370. Recalled, and is succeeded by Lord Fitzwilliam, 370, 375. Appointed Lord Privy Seal, in 1801, vi. 584. Ditto, in 1804, ib. 720.
- Wexford, murder of the Protestants at, v. 468.
- Whigs, views and proceedings of the, i. 158. The leaders of the, accept situations under government, iv. 164. Conduct of the, explained and defended, iv. 164. 170.
- Whigs, society of the London Constitutional, address the French National Assembly, iii. 225.
- Whitbread, Mr. moves for information respecting the conduct of the Warwickshire magistrates, during the riots at Birmingham, iii. 167. Praises the dissenters, 168. Supports Mr. Grey's motion respecting a reform in Parliament, 439.
- Whitbread, Mr. opposes the bill for embodying the French emigrants, and objects to the employment of Roman Catholics, foreigners, who have taken no test, iv. 81. Makes a motion, for presenting a remonstrance to the King, against all the treaties entered into with the confederate powers, since the commencement of the war, 89.
- Whitbread, Mr. moves a vote of censure on Mr. Pitt, for his conduct respecting the mutiny at Portsmouth, in 1797, v. 149. Loses his motion by 237 against 63, 150.
- Whitbread, Mr. defends the First Consul, and arraigns the conduct of Ministers, for rejecting the pacific overtures from France, in 1799, 1800, vi. 412. Ridicules the idea of endeavouring to restore a banished Sovereign, 413. Corrected by Mr. Canning, ib. Seconds Mr. Grey's motion for an inquiry into the state of the nations on the change of Ministry, in 1801, 589. Attacks the financial system of Mr. Pitt, 652. Makes a motion against Mr. Pitt, for



advancing money to Boyd and Benfield, 763. Loses his motion, 764. Moves a series of resolutions, against Lord Melville, 770.

White-Boys, Irish, proceedings of the, v. 318.

Whitworth, Lord, the English ambassador at Paris, complained to, by Buonaparté, of the licentiousness of the British press, vi. 661. Personally insulted by Buonaparté, ib. 666. Recalled from the French court, ib. 668.

Wickham, Mr. employed by Mr. Pitt, to ascertain the real views of the French government respecting peace, in 1796, iv. 516. Applies to M. Barthelemi, on the subject, ib. 518. Examination of the new principle, advanced by the French government, in their note to, v. 4. Recall of, from Berne, ib. 509.

Wilberforce, Mr. moves for the abolition of the Slave Trade, ii. 545.

Wilberforce, Mr. moves as an amendment to the address, proposed at the meeting of Parliament, in the winter of 1794, that a negotiation for peace be opened with France, iv. 237. Loses his amendment, by 246 against 73, 247. Supports Mr. Grey's motion for opening a negotiation with France, 264. Makes a similar motion himself, 283. Loses it, by 201 to 86, 292.

Wilberforce, Mr. defends the Minister, for having sent a pecuniary supply to the Emperor of Germany, without the previous consent of Parliament, v. 44. Deprecates an expected defence of his morals, by Mr. Sheridan, 76. Declares his intention of bringing the duel between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney before Parliament, 271.

Wilberforce, Mr. supports Lord Belgrave's amendment, on Mr. Nicholls's motion, respecting the alleged dismissal of Mr. Pitt, 656.

William III. retrospect of the state of Ireland, from the reign of, till Lord Townshend's administration, v. 295.

Williams, Helen Maria, atrocious opinion of, iii. 257.

Williamstadt, ineffectual attempts of the French to reduce, iii. 419.

Willis, Dr. opinion of, respecting the King's illness, ii. 128. Annuity granted to, ib. 485.

Wilson, Hugh, conveyed to Fort George, in Scotland, to be transported, v. 486.

Wilson, Sir Robert, account of the expedition to Egypt, by, v. 578. Statement of, respecting Buonaparté's murder of 3,800 Turkish prisoners, and poisoning 580 sick soldiers at Jaffa, vi. 277. 280.

Winchester, the Bishop of, supports Sir H. Mildmay's bill for preventing British subjects from taking the veil, vi. 493.



Windham, Mr. opens the sixth charge against Mr. Hastings, respecting Fyzool Khan, i. 420.

Windham, Mr. opposes Mr. Flood's plan for Parliamentary Reform, ii. 468. Supports Mr. Mitford's motion, for the relief of Roman Catholics, ii. 558.

Windham, Mr. opposes Mr. Grey's plan of Reform, iii. 149. Opposes Mr. Sheridan's motion for an enquiry into the existence of seditious practices, 401. Opposes Mr. Fox's motion for a peace with France, 462.

Windham, Mr. defends Ministers against the attacks of Messrs. Fox and Sheridan, iv. 20. Opposes the abstract principle of Mr. Grey's motion, on the landing of the Hessian troops, that it is contrary to law, to employ foreign troops in England, 53. Accuses the Opposition of favouring the views of the enemy, 57. Opposes Gen Fitzpatrick's motion for the liberation of M. La Fayette, 93. Ridicules the arguments of Opposition, in the debate on Mr. Pitt's bill for detaining persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies, and terms them a Committee of Jacobins, 140. Appointed Secretary at War, 164. Opposes Mr. Wilberforce's motion for opening a negotiation with France, 237. Represents the fatal consequences of a premature peace, 238. Censures Mr. Sheridan, for denying the existence of seditious plots, and instances the conviction of Watt and Downie, 248, 249. Characterizes Mr. Sheridan's speech, on moving for a repeal of the Habeas Corpus Suspension act, as an appeal to the Jacobin clubs, 249. Defends the Duke of Portland, and other leaders of the Whig party, against the attacks of Mr. Sheridan, 250. Proposes an augmentation of the army, 255. Opposes Mr. Wilberforce's motion for peace, 283. Supports the Pitt and Grenville bills, for preventing treason and sedition, 449. Defends Mr. Reeves's "*Thoughts on the English government*," against the attacks of the Opposition, 470.

Windham, Mr. supports Lord Temple's call on Mr. Tierney, to name the Editor of the Courier, in order that he might be indicted for having published a libel upon government, in that paper, v. 287.

Windham, Mr. corrects a mistake of Mr. Sheridan's, respecting the object of the Irish Union, vi. 227. Ridicules the notion of the sovereignty of the people, 228. Opposes Sir H. Mildmay's bill, for preventing British subjects from taking the veil. 487. Ridicules the idea of danger, from the Catholic religion, ib. Condemns the treaty of peace with France, in 1801, 645. Describes the nature and spirit of the French government, 646. Coincides with Mr. Pitt, respecting the inefficiency of the measures proposed for the defence of the country, in 1803, 690. Considers the Volun-



- teers as useless, 691. Censures the conduct of Ministers respecting the dispute with Spain, in 1804, 743.
- Wines, foreign, bill for subjecting the duties on, to the excise, i. 305.
- Winterthur, defeat of the French at, in 1799, vi. 319.
- Women, pregnant, horrible instances of cruelty towards, iv. 189, 190. Heroism of the Swiss, v. 520.
- Wool, bill to prevent the exportation of, i. 480.
- Worms, surrender of, to the French troops, iii. 414.
- Wurmser, Gen. compelled to re-cross the Rhine, iv. 185. Detached to Italy, in 1796, ib. 547. Takes the command of the Austrian army in Italy, ib. 586. Repulses the French, 618. Is again attacked and defeated, ib. Retreats into the Tyrol, ib. 589. Defeated, at Trent, ib. 591. Beats the French at Mantua, ib. 592.
- Wurtemburgh, the Prince of, raised to the dignity of Elector, vi. 659.
- Wycombe, Lord, denies the legality of voluntary contributions, for the defence of the country, iv. 59.

## X.

- Xerxes, comparison of, with Admiral Nelson, vi. 12.

## Y.

- Yeomanry, Irish, establishment of the, v. 382, 383.
- Yeomen, Catholic, disaffection of the Irish, v. 458.
- York, the Duke of, deprecates the discussion of the question of right, respecting the Prince of Wales's claim to the Regency, ii. 45. Marriage of, iii. 115. Joins the Austrians, with an English army, ib. 485. Commences the siege of Dunkirk, ib. 487. Defeated by the French, and compelled to raise the siege, ib. 488. Refuses to act in a subordinate station to General Clerfayt, iv. 180. Evacuates Nimeguen, ib. 185. Appointed to command the expedition against Holland, in 1799, vi. 341. Arrives in Holland, and takes the command of the combined army of English and Russians, ib. 344. Defeats the enemy in different engagements, ib. Compelled to retreat, owing to the imprudent courage of the Russians, ib. Obtains reinforcements, ib. 346. Thwarted a second time, by the Russians, ib. Defeats the enemy, ib. 348. Finds it expedient to retreat, ib. Concludes a convention with General Brune, for evacuating Holland, ib. 351. Returns to England, ib.
- York Town, in America, surrender of, to the French and the rebels, i. 4.
- Yorke, Mr. appointed Secretary at War, in 1801, vi. 584. Moves for a committee, on a bill for the suspension of the



army reserve act, ib. 708. Carries his motion by a majority of only 37, ib.

## Z.

Zug, the canton of, appeals to the French Directory, against the alteration of its government, v. 526. Refuses the civic oath, proposed by General Schauenbourg, v. 533. The inhabitants of, disarmed by the French, ib. 538.

Zurich, change of the constitution of, v. 413. Obstinate battle at, between the French and Austrians, in 1799, vi. 319.



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